This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

3 3433 06826653 9

New York Public Library

Rev. William H. Treadway

Collection

Purchased May 1st 1897.

SERMONS,

BY

ASA GRISWOLD,

A PRESBYTER OF THE P. E. CHURCH, IN THE DIOCESE OF ILLINOIS.

CHICAGO:
C. SCOTT, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER,
Corner Clark and South Water Streets.
1856.

8 P.M.R.

THE N
PUBLI
ASTOR,
TILDEN
1903

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by

A. GRISWOLD,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Northern District of Illinois.

PREFACE.

During the three years last past, I have been a Missionary in the Diocese of Illinois. I have traveled much, and preached often. Several of my friends, in whose integrity and piety I have entire confidence, have expressed a wish to see in print, a part, at least, of the many sermons which I have preached to them. In compliance with such wish, I have therefore selected the following sermons for publication. My prayer is, that the sermons here published, may be promotive of piety, virtue, and the true religion.

A. GRISWOLD.

Chicago, Ill., July, 1856.

CONTENTS.

			Page
SERMON	I.	Prayer,	7
"	II.	God a sure Refuge,	24
"	III.	Repentance,	35
"	IV.	Keeping God's Commandments,	51
"	V.	The Christian Race,	64
"	VI.	The Folly of Atheism,	79
"	VII.	Nonconformity to the World, and the Renewing of the Mind,	93
"	VIII.	Pride,	111
"	IX.	Sons of God, in a Spiritual sense,	123
"	X.	Industry,	139
"	XI.	The Necessity of being Influenced by the Holy Spirit,	152
"	XII.	The Necessity of Seeking and of Serving God through Righteousness,	167
"	XIII.	The Christian Warfare,	184
"	XIV.	On bearing False Witness,	198

			Page
SERMON	XV.	A Sermon for Advent Sunday, .	215
"	XVI.	A Sermon for Christmas, . . .	227
"	XVII.	A Sermon for Epiphany, . . .	245
"	XVIII.	A Sermon for Ash-Wednesday, .	258
"	XIX.	A Lenten Sermon, ...	272
"	XX.	A Sermon for Good Friday, . .	284
"	XXI.	A Sermon for Easter Sunday, .	303
"	XXII.	An Ascension Sermon, . . .	318
"	XXIII.	A Sermon for Whit-Sunday, .	335
"	XXIV.	A Sermon for Trinity Sunday, .	349

"PREACH THE WORD: BE INSTANT IN SEASON; OUT OF SEASON: REPROVE, REBUKE, EXHORT, WITH ALL LONG SUFFERING AND DOCTRINE."

—SECOND TIMOTHY IV. 2.

SERMON I.

PRAYER.

1 Thessalonians v. 17.

"PRAY WITHOUT CEASING."

PRAYER is the offering up of our desires to God. In this offering, the soul breathes forth its wishes to its Maker, through Christ, our Intercessor. Thus, through Christ we have the privilege of petitioning our Heavenly Father for relief in all our necessities and wants.

Christ has condescended to become our great High Priest; so that when we pray through him, he presents our petitions in his own name, to God the Father. Hence, he makes our prayers his own, that he may give them efficacy, and cause them to be availing.

He being one of the Three Persons in the Trinity, and these Three being of one sub-

stance, power and eternity, it follows that he is equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost. He is, therefore, an all-powerful Intercessor in our behalf.

He is also, as we learn from the sacred oracles, continually interceding for us, by prayers, which are not ours, but peculiarly his own: and he pleads for us through the merits of that atonement which he made for our sins, and for the sins of the world, when he offered himself a bleeding sacrifice upon the cross. Surely, he is entitled to our gratitude and love; and surely, we have encouragement to pray, since we can offer our prayers through an Almighty Advocate.

The reasonableness of prayer appears from the insufficiency of man to help himself, and the sufficiency of God for his relief, support and comfort.

In God "we live, and move, and have our being." Our temporal and eternal destinies are in His hand. We are dependent on Him for our breath, our life, our faculties of body and of mind, and for every temporal and spiritual blessing that we enjoy. He can augment or diminish these blessings.

He can grant us a further continuance of them, or He can entirely withhold them from us, at His pleasure.

He is the Creator, the Sustainer, and the Governor, of the Universe; the ultimate Cause of all things; the Grand Dispenser of happiness and misery. He "is Lord over all." He "is God, blessed forever."

He, therefore, is able to grant our petitions—to give us abundantly more than we ask or think. On the other hand, we are incapable, without His aid, to supply our wants. Without Him, we should be helpless, and hopeless, and wretched.

The reasonableness of prayer is also evinced from the goodness of God: His goodness as displayed in His works of creation, and in His Providence; and especially, in the manifold blessings which He bestows upon us. This goodness proves incontestably, that it is agreeable to His nature to impart happiness to His creatures.

He has evidently created the earth, in all its parts, with a design that it should contribute to the support and comfort of living beings: and if we reason from analogy, He has formed the many heavenly bodies with

the same design, peopling them with innumerable multitudes.

He has likewise so constituted the animated parts of creation, that they derive much satisfaction and happiness from their own organized forms; that they have truly much enjoyment from their own existence. We know, too, that all living creatures would be immediately unhappy, were it not that He constantly and beneficently extends to them His protection, His providential care. Since, therefore, He is disposed to do His creatures good, we may be encouraged to supplicate Him for His mercy and His favor.

His wisdom, also, further attests the reasonableness of prayer. He so wisely disposes of the things that He has created, that they, by conducing to happiness, fulfill His design in creating them. The earth, the air, the sea; this world and all its furniture; and, by parity of reason, the solar and siderial worlds, nay, all material and spiritual existences, are, through Him, communicative of happiness. Hence we may pray to Him, confidently expecting that He will answer our prayers, in His wisdom, giving us those things which are good for us, and withholding the things which are hurtful.

He, then, is able to answer prayer, for He is infinite in power. He can answer it as is most beneficial for His creatures; for He is infinitely wise. And that He really answers it as is most expedient for them, is obvious, since He is infinitely beneficent.

Through His omniscience, He indeed knows our necessities before we pray; and through His beneficence, He is disposed to give us what we need.

His beneficence, however, does not supersede the necessity of our prayers. For He undoubtedly requires them as a means whereby we receive from Him favors that He would otherwise withhold.

Prayer is entreaty. And God has so constituted men that they naturally and universally betake themselves to entreaty when they would obtain favors from one another. And is it not reasonable to believe, that He requires that towards Himself which He prompts us by our nature to offer to our fellow-men? If so, and it appears really to be so, then He gives us, in consequence of prayer, things that He would not give us, if our prayers were withheld.

He is a Being infinitely beneficent, de-

lighting to do good to mankind. From prayer, much good to men is derived. Is not the inference, then, irresistible, that He, in mercy to men, has ordained that they should practice it?

It humbles their proud spirit, subdues the asperity of their temper, chastens their feelings, and improves their disposition, advancing them in religion, piety and virtue, and causing them to yield more implicitly to the Divine commands. Are not these chastened feelings and the pious and obedient disposition which it gives them, blessings?—blessings which are great and inestimable?—and blessings which, were men destitute of prayer, would be lost?

It is through the feelings, the disposition in question, that the performance of moral and religious duties, and manifold blessings consequent to that performance, may be frequently, nay, continually traced to the spirit of prayer.

Consequently, prayer is a means of leading us to happiness; for it inspires us with greater devotion, and disposes us to duty and to holiness. And without holiness, without devotion and the performance of

our duty, we can never be happy, here or hereafter.

Happiness in time and eternity, therefore, is made to depend very much on the exercise of prayer to our heavenly Father.

Is it not then reasonable to pray? Who can deny that there are blessings and happiness resulting from prayer? For, who can for a moment doubt that prayer excites in mankind a knowledge of their dependence upon God? a sense of His agency in the affairs of the universe? gratitude for favors received at His hands? a realizing sense of their own unworthiness and sinfulness? a resolution to reform, and to live more to the Divine acceptance? and to attain to that obedience, to that purity of faith and holiness necessary for future felicity? and that through the medium of these things men are made better, and consequently happier; that by these things they become qualified to enter on a heavenly inheritance?

It is evident, therefore, from reason and the light of nature, that prayer is beneficial, and that it is a duty incumbent upon all.

The Scriptures also positively assure us

both of the duty and efficacy of prayer. Their language is: "Ask and ye shall receive:" "Seek and ye shall find:" "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" "Pray without ceasing:" "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

Can a believer in the Scripture refrain from prayer? The scriptural injunction to pray is plain and positive. It is solemnly expressed, and often repeated. Men have ears to hear it, and their duty is to have hearts and minds to obey it. It is none other than an injunction of God himself. Hence they are under the greatest and most solemn obligations to yield it their obedience.

They should obey it through love and gratitude to God, and through fear of offending Him by neglecting it. They should obey it as a means of making themselves better and more holy in their lives; for they should at all times love and practice

holiness. They should obey it, that they may become examples of prayer to others. Finally, they should obey it, that, through obedience, they may be saved from their sins, and be happy.

The Scripture affords us many examples of prayer. These examples are worthy of imitation; and happy shall we be, if we imitate them. Moses and Samuel, David and Solomon, and Elijah; Saint Peter, Saint Stephen, and Saint Paul: in short, patriarchs and prophets, evangelists and apostles, were men of prayer. Nor did they honor God with their lips only, but in their lives. The genuineness of their devotion was manifested by their fruits of good living.

The primitive Christians and Israelites, the martyrs to Christianity, and all holy men of old, were prayerful. In a word, the truly pious, in all ages and countries, have ever offered prayers and thanks to the Author of all good. Many of the heathen are, without doubt, at this very moment, lifting their voices and their hearts in prayer to the Creator. And shall any in Christian lands, by neglecting their prayers, be more impious than heathen?

Are any ashamed of prayer? Let them reflect, that the Saviour was more honorable than they, and that he humbled himself, praying with humility and fervency. Are any in doubt whether prayer is availing with God? If they will but have the spirit of prayer, their doubts will be removed; for the efficacy of prayer is proved not only by reason and the Scripture, but by personal experience.

He who repents of sin, desiring and endeavoring to be holy, and, through faith in Christ, prays earnestly for the pardon and the grace of God, will have the Spirit of God bearing witness with his spirit, that his sins are forgiven; that he has passed from spiritual death to spiritual life; and that he has become an heir to the glory that shall be revealed hereafter. Being created anew in Christ Jesus, and realizing the efficacy of prayer, he will pray, and "without ceasing;" for the spirit of prayer will be within him.

Prayer is "without ceasing," when made periodically; as for instance, when made daily, in the morning and again in the evening; or when offered weekly, on the holy Sabbath; for although in these cases inter-

vals of time occur between one exercise of it and another, yet it ceases not to be made when the usual time of making it returns. It ceases indeed for a while, but not entirely, for it is to be again renewed. It is also without ceasing, when made at irregular periods of time; provided, the habit of making it be not wholly discontinued.

But the exhortation of the apostle, to "pray without ceasing," undoubtedly refers more especially to that pious disposition, that holy feeling, of which Christians should be continually possessed; and his meaning is, that they should never be divested of this feeling; and, consequently, that they should be always ready to call it into exercise, and that they should be in the habit of practical devotion.

Prayer consists not so much in words uttered by the organs of speech, as in thought and in feeling. The words of prayer are merely the external signs of the feeling within. There is in them no virtue or holiness independently of the feeling that gives them utterance. It is, therefore, in feeling that prayer essentially and principally consists. This feeling is denominated

disposition, desire, heavenly-mindedness, holiness of spirit—figuratively, a change of heart.

The disposition of man, in his natural state, is unregenerate and carnal, opposed to God and to the law which God has prescribed for the regulation of human conduct. But when changed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, it becomes regenerate and holy, submissive to the Divine will—the Divine law.

Prayer is the exercise of this holy disposition; and to pray without ceasing, is to exercise this disposition unceasingly and continually. Hence, prayer may be with the use of words, or without them. And when words are used, they may be either silently or audibly employed; for, it is the exercise of the disposition, and not the exercise of words, that constitutes true and genuine prayer to Almighty God; and this prayer, as has been already observed, may be unceasing and continual, although not made at every moment of duration, but only at particular times and on particular occasions.

From this view of the subject it is mani-

'est, that to be prayerful, in obedience to :he command in the text, we must be :hanged, spiritually regenerated.

This change is probably sometimes instan- :aneous, as in the case of Paul; sometimes gradual, as it appears from what we collect from Scripture to have been in the case of Peter. But the question, whether it is for the most part instantaneously or gradually performed, savors more of metaphysics than theology, and is of far less consequence than the inquiry, whether the change has actually been wrought within us.

We may experience the change without being able to distinguish the very instant of its occurrence; for we may reasonably believe, that it does not generally occur in an instant; and when it does, we cannot distinguish that instant from other portions of time, because an instant is the least part of time that can be noticed by the mind; and we can never determine its duration, nor, consequently, its beginning nor ending, until we know, what we never can know, the nature and essence of time itself.

We also experience this change without knowing its process. When a blind man

was restored to his sight, by the power of the Saviour, and was questioned with respect to the process by which his sight was recovered, he was ignorant of that process; but, said he, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

So we, who are spiritually blind, experience a restoration to our spiritual vision, without knowing the process of the restoration.

Hence, all captious and vain disquisitions relative to the inquiry whether the change in question is performed partially by the agency of man, or wholly by the agency of God, should cease; for if we strive to know the process by which the Holy Spirit operates upon the heart, and by which we submit to the influence of that Spirit, we then endeavor to resolve the inquiry by endeavoring to be "wise above what is written," and to know what is beyond the reach of human knowledge.

We are taught by the pen of Inspiration that "God works in us to will and to do, of His good pleasure." And we are also taught, that we ourselves must repent, and work out our salvation, with fear and trembling.

Then let us endeavor to do our duty. But let us not strive to know what God has wisely withheld from us. Let us endeavor to be converted, although we can never know precisely the process of conversion. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

But to be prayerful, and consequently holy, we must certainly be changed, converted, spiritually born again. "Marvel not," said the Saviour to Nicodemus, "that I said unto you, ye must be born again." Likewise he said to his disciples, "Except ye be converted, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

He who is spiritually regenerate, will be prayerful. He will aspire after holiness. He will "hunger and thirst after righteousness;" and he will be filled with righteousness and peace. He will believe in the Scripture. He will have faith in Christ. He will repent of sin, and he will "bring forth works meet for repentance." He will live soberly, righteously and godly.

If we are, as we ought to be, born of the Spirit—prayerfully, virtuously, and religiously disposed—we shall reverence God as our Creator, Sustainer, and Benefactor. We shall worship Him as the Lord of the Universe. We shall adore Him for the infinite perfections of His nature. We shall thank Him for His beneficence. We shall praise Him for His greatness and His goodness, and for the wonderful displays of His power and His providence. Agreeably to His command, we shall love both Him and our fellow-men. We shall acknowledge our sinfulness, and implore His forgiveness, and we shall pray for His grace, that we may be enabled to live to His acceptance, and attain to His Heavenly Kingdom.

We shall devotedly and faithfully engage in private devotion; in family and social worship; and in the public worship and service of the Church.

By this means we shall obtain pardon for our sins. By this means we shall receive constant renewals of the Holy Spirit. By this means we shall have the hope and assurance of a blessed immortality. By this means we shall live in the enjoyment "of

the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

By this means, others may be admonished to piety and prayer. By this means, our families may be influenced to be prayerful and holy, and our children more thoroughly brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

By this means, we shall live in the constant discharge of our various duties. By this means we shall, when we come to die, have an easier transition from time to eternity. And by this means we shall ultimately attain to the enjoyment of God, "in whom there is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

May God dispose us to piety and prayer, and may He save us with an Everlasting salvation. Amen.

SERMON II.

GOD A SURE REFUGE.

Psalm lxii. 7.

"My Refuge is in God."

Nothing that is earthly, can afford a permanent and secure refuge from the afflictions of human life. Nevertheless, mankind are continually, though fruitlessly, engaged in seeking for that refuge in earthly things. It is, therefore, on account of their misdirected efforts, that, whilst they are aspiring after happiness, they so frequently and generally fail in the attainment of their object.

Affliction is unavoidable. It is felt, to a greater or a less extent, by every individual. None can be exempt from it by the present possession of health, of riches and of honors, and of other enjoyments that are earthly.

Since these enjoyments are at all times liable not only to be diminished, but also to be lost; since there is a fear of losing them, and an inordinate desire that they may be increased and continued; and since, above all, they are unsatisfying in their nature, when possessed; they are often, through the wrong feelings of mankind, the very causes of affliction.

The fact, that in whatever degree they may be possessed, they can never give entire satisfaction to the mind—can never produce genuine and true happiness—is a proof that they are not a sufficient refuge from the evils and distresses of our present state of being.

Many of these enjoyments, as, for instance, food, and raiment, and good health, the society of relatives and friends, and the cultivation of the mental powers, contribute to the comfort and welfare of men. They are the gifts of God, and, for bestowing them, He is entitled to our gratitude.

There are other enjoyments which are criminal and vicious; as, for instance, voluptuous and unlawful pleasures. God has forbidden them, and to indulge in them

is to draw down His vengeance for disobedience. It is indeed true, that to indulge in those things which God has forbidden, leads inevitably to misery.

Nor is indulgence in those earthly or temporal enjoyments, which He permits, and which are, therefore, in themselves innocent, the sure means of happiness; for this indulgence may be excessive, and consequently wrong; and that which is wrong cannot be the source from which happiness can flow; and though this indulgence may be temperate, within the bounds of moderation, it cannot afford real happiness, because it is in earthly things, from which real, permanent and substantial happiness or satisfaction cannot be derived.

It is religion, and nothing else, that can cause us and others to be satisfied and happy, in this world and in the next. Religion is not temporal or earthly, but spiritual and heavenly in its nature.

It is neither health, nor friends, nor the riches, nor the honors, nor the pleasures of this life, nor all that the world affords; but it is religion which comforts the feelings, satisfies the mind, and consoles the thoughts

of man, and causes him to be contented and happy amidst the vicissitudes, the trials and adversities of his present state.

The rich and the honored, who are surrounded by friends, and who have amusements and pleasures at command, are frequently much afflicted. Their enjoyments being many, they are, in fact, oftentimes more liable than others to affliction, for they have more of this world to lose. As "the tallest trees of the forest are the most exposed to the wind," so men who have the most of earthly possessions, are often the most subject to adversity. If without religion, they have nothing that can effectually allay their distress in their adverse fortune.

But if they are truly religious, they will not be unhappy at their losses, which they will consider as the chastenings of Divine Providence, and to which they will therefore patiently submit. If religious, they will imitate Job, who thankfully possessed his enjoyments, and acknowledged them as gifts of the beneficent Creator; and who, when deprived of them, was not guilty of murmuring, but was resigned to the loss,

confessed it to be providential, and said in humility: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away! blessed be the name of the Lord!"

The poor, the unhonored and the ignorant, who have but little that the world affords, if they fail to obtain what they desire, what they are exerting themselves to possess, property, knowledge and applause, and other things of an earthly nature; or, if they are disappointed in not receiving the enjoyment which they expected from these things, when their exertions are successful, are uneasy, discontented and harassed in their feelings, except they be religious. It is not riches, it is religion, that can alleviate the uneasiness of the poor and the destitute, and make them feel like an apostle when he said, "I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content."

Religion is therefore "the one thing needful" for the rich and the poor; for the honored and the unhonored; for the knowing and the ignorant—in a word, for all classes of mankind, in whatever condition in life they may be placed.

Religion consists in believing and in do-

ing what God has commanded. That men may be able thus to do and believe, He gives them His Grace, which is His spiritual assistance. He gives it to all, without exception, and He gives it through the merits of Christ's death; and through the same merits they are able to receive it and to improve it for the purpose for which it is bestowed.

As religion could not be embraced, were it not for His assistance, therefore religion is His gift, and He proffers it to all. They who accept and receive it, find it to be the means of seeking after God as their refuge in distress; whilst they who reject it, find nothing else whereby they can make God their refuge and protection from trouble and affliction. Said the Psalmist unto God: "Thou art my Help and my Deliverer;" and his meaning obviously was, that, because he was religious, God would protect and defend him in the time of trouble. They who cannot adopt the language of the Psalmist, should consider whether they can reasonably look for relief from the evils which they feel, except that relief come from God, through the instrumentality of religion.

Though their earthly enjoyments may afford them some degree of comfort, yet those enjoyments being of an unsatisfying nature, can never be the sources of real and substantial happiness; and being extremely uncertain in continuance, may cease, may have an end suddenly and unexpectedly.

Hence they who possess but few of these enjoyments, and they who possess the most, if they would be happy, must seek for happiness through religion, through which, and which alone, it is derived from God, by whom it is bestowed.

All men have some of the enjoyments in question, and are liable to a loss in the same. But they should have recourse to religion, as the means of consolation.

When property is lost, when friends are alienated, when the tongue of slander utters its calumny, when health is impaired, when persecution arises, when death severs relatives and friends from each other—in short, when distress of any kind is felt—where should a refuge from affliction be expected, except in religion and in God? Religion, inasmuch as it affords a well-

grounded hope of a happy immortality in a future world sustains the Christian in all his trials in the present life.

Nor will his hope be disappointed, inasmuch as it is founded on the promises of his Maker; promises that his soul, whilst separated from his body by death, shall be blessed; and also that afterwards his soul and his body shall be re-united, and have an endless and felicitous existence.

Thus religion leads its possessors to a refuge, which, in the language of the text, is in God, who has destined those that embrace it, to be happy, comparatively here, and perfectly hereafter.

But they who are without religion, are without this refuge. If they have a hope of being happy in the future, their hope is by no means genuine. Like the spider's web: It is weak: It is frail: It is unsubstantial.

They ought to be sensible of their situation. Their fears should be awakened. They should reform their principles and their conduct. They should embrace religion, and be obedient to its precepts, until like the Psalmist, they can say, that their refuge is in God.

In this world, we are subject to many evils. We have pains of body, and disquietudes of mind.

What can support us in our trials? Nothing that is earthly; for earthly things are short-lived and unsatisfying, corrupting and evanescent. We must then be supported by something which is spiritual and heavenly. Religion is Divinely proffered for the purpose. It leads us, not to an earthly refuge, which would be unstable, uncertain, and delusive. But it leads us to God, who is a refuge, sure and certain; sufficient and eternal.

God is unchangeable. With Him there is "no variableness nor shadow of turning." Therefore, the refuge which He affords us, by means of religion, is certain, permanent and enduring.

Then let us, by doing and believing as He commands, flee to this refuge, that amidst the trials, the troubles and afflictions of this life, we may be defended by the power of His Grace, and be qualified for an inheritance above.

Let us believe in the existence, the character, the attributes and the promises of

God. Let us trust in Him, and depend upon Him for salvation and future happiness. Let us truly repent of our sins, and bring forth works meet for repentance. Let us be holy in our nature, and righteous in our lives. Let our desires and our thoughts, our speech and our conduct, be virtuous and good.

To this end, let us, privately and publicly, offer up our prayers, our thanks, and our praises to Almighty God. To this end, let us not forget the assembling of ourselves together, and attending to the worship, the sacraments, the ordinances and the service of the Church. To this end, let us diligently search the Scripture, and practice as it directs, and let us teach it to our children. To this end, let us love God with all the heart, and our neighbors as ourselves; and to this end, let us keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

Thus may we find an eternal refuge, even a heavenly inheritance in God, if we pass the time of our sojourning here prayerfully, penitently and righteously. On the other hand, if we pass the time of our pilgrimage on the earth without faith, impenitently

and unrighteously, we shall never find that refuge, that inheritance; but perdition will be our portion.

May we, therefore, during the continuance of our life, during our probationary state, during the time here allotted to us for preparing for death, for the judgment and eternity, so conduct, so perform our duty, so live in the exercise of religious graces, that God will protect and defend us; that He will ever extend to us His assistance; that He will so influence and direct us by His Holy Spirit, that we may meet with His acceptance; finally, that He will be our refuge, in the present world and that which is to come. Amen.

SERMON III.

REPENTANCE.

Luke xv. 21.

"FATHER, I HAVE SINNED AGAINST HEAVEN AND IN THY SIGHT, AND AM NO MORE WORTHY TO BE CALLED THY SON."

THESE words, were delivered by the Saviour, in a parable; which represented a prodigal son as repenting of his misconduct, in wasting his paternal inheritance.

This son, according to the parable, was brought by his prodigality, to a state of starvation. By his starvation he was brought to repentance: And by repentance, he obtained the forgiveness, and assistance of his father.

The parable is representative of the spiritual condition of men. God privileged them originally, with a title to everlasting happiness. Through sin, they have forfeited this title. Hence they are spiritually

famished; and they must die, an eternal death, except they repent, and be forgiven of God.

If they sincerely repent, God will forgive them; and will restore to them, their original title to happiness.

When we behold; and we have not unfrequently occasion to behold, a person brought by his licentiousness and vice to a state of wretchedness and disgrace; and at last to an untimely, and miserable end; our sympathy is excited at his suffering. We lament that he swerved from the practice of virtue; and that he has not been prevented from his fate, by repentance and timely reformation.

Thus, we are afflicted at his condition, when we consider it only in relation to this world. But when we consider it in relation to the world which is to come, our affliction is increased exceedingly: For the misery of this life, in its most aggravated forms, is incomparably less, than that experienced in eternity by those who die without repentance for their sins.

We are all sinners, both by nature, and by practice. Hence, we all need repentance.

Without it, our misery hereafter, will be greater than that of the most prodigal and wicked, during their continuance, in this state of being.

Is the sight of an unreclaimed prodigal to be loathed? Is his life to be abhorred? Is the temporal ruin into which he has fallen to be avoided? Is there a feeling of horror attached to the contemplation of his death? Then let it be considered, that they who live and die impenitent, will be his companions after death: That the wretchedness of his condition will then be augmented, and that theirs will be like it.

Would it be gratifying to behold a repenting prodigal humbly acknowledging his faults, and imploring his father's forgiveness? and then to behold the father bestowing his pardon, and rejoicing that his son was reclaimed? To a virtuous and pious mind, such a scene, would be highly gratifying and consolatory. Is it not more gratifying, and consoling, to see an individual confessing his sins to God; and feeling an assurance of pardon? or to behold persons assembled around the family altar, or in the Christian church, making their united

confessions to their Heavenly Father, and supplicating and receiving His forgiveness and His grace?

But what pours into our bosoms the sweetest, the most precious consolation, is a realizing sense of the Divine forgiveness extended to us personally, through our repentance, and the confession of our sins.

It is the duty of us all, to be penitent; and to manifest our penitence, in private, and public prayer. Confession of our sins to God, is a part of prayer: And we should both feel and confess, that we have erred and strayed from His ways: That we have followed too much, the devices, and desires of our hearts: That we have offended against His holy laws: That we have sinned against Heaven; and in His sight.

Thus, we should have deep and heart-felt repentance: And there should be a manifestation of this repentance, by a confession of our lips: By humble, and devotional acknowledgments to the God of all grace.

The conduct and condition of the prodigal, with respect to his father, were intended to depict, the conduct and condition of mankind with respect to God.

This prodigal had wasted, not only a part of his patrimony, but the whole of it. He had wasted it not merely by negligence, but by positive acts of wickedness.

Thus, he had not only abused the goodness of his earthly parent, who had bestowed on him a portion of worldly substance; but had improvidently and wickedly reduced himself to extreme and abject want; so that he would fain have eaten what the very swine had refused to eat.

Had he remained unhumbled: Had he refused to present himself before his father; and acknowledge his faults; and ask forgiveness, he would have perished.

But when he became a humble supplicant, confessing his crimes, in the language of the text; his father forgave him; supplied his necessities; and rejoiced; exclaiming; "This my son was dead, and is alive again: Was lost, and is found."

So it is with mankind. They have forfeited not only a part, but the whole of their title to future happiness. They have forfeited it not merely, by their hereditary sin, transmitted to them from Adam; but by their own actual transgressions.

They have therefore abused the goodness of the Creator, who made them originally the heirs of future happiness. By this means, they have lost their claims to that happiness; and they are sunk to such spiritual degradation, that instead of seeking their "joy in God, in whom there is fullness of joy," they are prone to seek it in the vanities of the world, which can no more afford true and substantial enjoyment, than that which the swine have left, can afford proper sustenance for the support of human life.

They who remain unwilling to repent; to confess and forsake their wickedness, will be destroyed. Their souls, and bodies will perish; irretrievably; Eternally. But they who confess their sins, with humble, penitent, and contrite hearts, will be pardoned. "God will be faithful and just to forgive them their sins; and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness:" And He will, eventually, give them the fruition of that happiness, for which they were originally created; and for which, they have been through His mercy redeemed.

Repentance is a property of holiness.

And when we reflect, that God created man to be happy; that man has made himself to be the heir of misery; that God unwilling that any should be miserable, has prescribed holiness, as the terms, on which He proffers salvation to all;—how does it become mankind, with gratitude to accept of the terms? To practice holiness; and consequently repentance; and to be saved?

Another property of holiness is faith, which consists, not in mere speculative belief; but in belief which is purified by holy principles, and holy feelings.

Not only repentance, and Faith, but all other qualities of piety and virtue are properties of holiness, which is the basis that supports them; the spiritual substance, in which they inhere; the fountain from which they emanate; the principle which causes them to be associated, by an indissoluble bond of spiritual union.

He, therefore, who has one holy quality, has the other qualities of holiness also; for the principle of holiness is within him, producing not only one of its effects; but all.

On the other hand; he who is destitute of one of the qualities in question, is desti-

tute of the other qualities of a like nature. For he is without the spirit of holiness. If he had that spirit, it would not leave him unfurnished with any quality that flows from it.

We may, therefore expatiate upon any one of these qualities, as being indispensably necessary for the attainment of happiness: For the want of it is a manifest proof of the want of holiness, without which, "no man shall see the Lord;"—without which, there is no salvation for any.

He, therefore who is without repentance, is "in the gall of bitterness; and bond of iniquity." He is spiritually condemned.

But, if he shall truly, and sincerely repent, he will be saved. His repentance will be accompanied with the other qualities of holiness; and he will be an heir to the Heavenly Inheritance.

My Hearers—Have we repented? Do we, as we ought, daily repent, of our sins, our misdoings, and our negligence?

Do we, in this respect, imitate as we ought, the Patriarch Job, who said, concerning what he had uttered unadvisedly; "I [illegible] myself and repent?"

Do we expect, as we are privileged to expect, the Divine assistance, through repentance, as Solomon expected it for Israel, when praying to God, in their behalf, he said; "if they sin against thee"—"and repent;"—"hear thou their prayer,"—"and maintain their cause?"

Do we make, as it becomes us, a personal application of what the Holy Spirit through the Prophet Ezekiel, declared to the House of Israel? "Repent; and turn yourselves from your Idols."

Do we have, as it is our duty to have, a realizing sense of the necessity that we are under of heeding the exhortation of Saint John, the baptist, when preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying; "repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand?"

Do we obey, as we are under the strongest obligations to obey, the Saviour, when he says; "repent ye, and believe the Gospel?"

Are we persuaded, as it behooves us at our peril to be persuaded, to repentance; according to the admonitions of the apostles? And more especially, according to the Divine command? Since "God," in the

language of inspiration, "commandeth men, every where, to repent."

In the Scriptures, repentance is represented as averting the wrath and heavy judgments of God, and as leading to happiness in future. It is therefore vitally important to all.

It is the duty of men to repent, because God commands it. It is their privilege, since through the Divine assistance, they are capable of repenting. And it is their interest; because, their happiness depends absolutely, on repentance.

How then, should they be admonished to repent? To make their peace with God? Who will then bestow upon them more and more, the gifts, the graces; and the assistance of His Spirit; working in them to will and to do, what is pleasing in His sight; perfecting them, in every good word and work; and bringing them at last, to His Heavenly rest.

The favors, which they have received from Him, should lead them to repentance. Then will He bestow upon them those favors more abundantly; enabling them to bring forth "the fruits of the Spirit;"—

"works meet for repentance;"—even holiness of heart, and of life.

The state of the prodigal in the parable, exhibits truly, the spiritual condition of the sinner.

The prodigal should have remained at home. He would then have been, uncontaminated with the vices of the world. But he wandered abroad; and became corrupted, by evil companions.

In like manner, the sinner, forsakes God: Associates with the wicked: And his principles, and practices, become vile.

The prodigal wasted his Earthly substance; and was reduced to want.

So the "sinner;" in the language of Solomon, "destroyeth much good." He makes havoc, of his spiritual gifts; and becomes spiritually wretched.

The prodigal, became servile and degraded; for the citizen, to whom he joined himself, sent him to feed swine.

So the sinner, sinks to spiritual servility. As the Evangelist affirms; "he is the servant of sin." As the Prophet Isaiah declares; "a deceived heart, hath turned him aside." He is indeed, degraded, and "labors,"

according to the declaration of a prophet, "for that which satisfieth not."

The prodigal, in the view of the law, was the same as lost, or dead. For having received his portion of his father's estate, the remainder belonged to his elder brother. He was also lost in a moral point of view, being through his licentiousness and vice, averse to what was virtuous and good.

So the sinner, being morally, and spiritually dead, through trespasses and sins, has great aversion to virtue, and to holiness: And is lost with respect to the Heavenly inheritance, leaving it to be enjoyed by his Brethren, who continue to dwell in righteousness, with God.

The prodigal was affected with madness; as is intimated, by the expression; "when he came to himself."

So sinners, in relation to their principles, their conduct, and their happiness in the present and future world; are in a mad, and frenzied state. As Solomon asserts; "madness is in their hearts whilst they live."

When the prodigal repented; his return to his father, represented the repenting

sinner's return to God. Being in want, he experienced affliction, which was the means of reforming him.

It is temporal, and spiritual affliction, which often causes the reformation of the sinful. Nebuchadnezzar, by being driven from the society of men, could acknowledge, what he had been unwilling to acknowledge before;—the sovereignty of Jehovah:—And Manasseh, when bound in fetters, could repent; though previously, a stranger to repentance.

When no man gave to the prodigal, he returned. And when the sinner finds, that the things of the world, afford no spiritual sustenance, he often returns to his Heavenly Father.

The prodigal considered. For, we read, that "he came to himself." He thought on his condition. He saw that he was perishing with hunger.

Sinners, when afflicted, are often made to consider: To reflect on their situation: To realize the perishing state, not only of their bodies, but their souls: To repent: And to return to their duty and their God.

The prodigal reflected, how much more

happy he would be, in his father's house, where there was "bread enough, and to spare." He then determined to go to his Father, and confess that he had sinned; and thus obtain forgiveness and assistance.

In like manner, sinners, by reflecting on their spiritual poverty and wretchedness; and the sufficiency of that "bread of life," which God has in store for the righteous, who obey Him; are frequently influenced to acknowledge their faults: To sue for the Divine pardon;—and to obtain it.

Thus, affliction, causes them to consider: And consideration brings them to repentance.

It is then, that like the prodigal, they condemn themselves as unworthy to be called sons. It is then, that they are willing to occupy a low station: To be servants, in the service of God. They can say with the Psalmist; "I had rather be a doorkeeper, in the House of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

It is then, that the expression; "My Father," is endearing. For they reflect, not only on His power, and His greatness; but on His clemency and goodness. It is

then, that they "arise, and come to God."—That like David; they make haste, and delay not to keep His commandments.

As the father hastened to meet the prodigal returning; and received his son with affection, compassion, and mercy; most tenderly embracing, and forgiving him; feasting him, and clothing him with Earthly apparel: So God receives those who are penitent, with still greater mercy and kindness, and forgiveness; feasting them with the bread of Eternal life; and clothing them with righteousness;—even "with the garments of Salvation."

We are all sinners. Then should we confess our sins to God, and receive His forgiveness. And may we be clothed with the "robe of righteousness;" which is a new, and regenerated nature. May our "feet be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace;" of which, the shoes, upon the feet of the returning prodigal were typical. May we "be adorned, with the earnest of the Spirit," of which the ring, in the parable of the prodigal, is emblematical. May we be fed with "the bread of life;" which is typified by the Eucharist, and which *is happiness.*

May we have acceptance with God. May our Elder brethren, the self-righteous and Pharisaical, be converted; and reconciled to that acceptance. May they rejoice in their own conversion: And may they and we rejoice; that whereas, we were spiritually dead; we are spiritually alive. That, whereas, we were spiritually lost; we are spiritually found.

Finally: May God grant us repentance, and forgiveness: And may He save us, with an Everlasting salvation; in a world without end. Amen.

SERMON IV.

KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS.

Ecclesiastes xii. 13.

"Fear God, and Keep His Commandments."

The fear, which in this text of Scripture is enjoined, is not of a servile and slavish nature. It is not that which produces horror, affright, and despair. It is of a filial kind. It is that which is fraught with love and affection for God; and which causes those who possess it, to reverence Him; and to keep His commandments.

That we ought to make God the chief object of our affections: That we ought to reverence and love Him; and, consequently to obey Him: In other words; that we ought to possess and exercise towards Him, a filial fear; is evident; since we are His creatures; and dependent on Him, for our temporal, and spiritual blessings.

He is our Creator and Sustainer. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." All our enjoyments flow from His beneficence. He is the rightful proprietor of our souls, our bodies, our temporal possessions; in a word; of all that we are, and all that we possess.

He has commanded us to love and obey Him; and surely, He is entitled to our love and obedience.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart," is the First of His commandments. If we obey it, we shall be prepared to obey whatever else He enjoins. But if we disobey Him, in this respect, we shall not be qualified for rendering Him our obedience, in other cases. We must, therefore love God, in order to fear Him, as the text enjoins.

We should love Him because He is our benefactor, giving us the good things which we need: Because He will punish us, if we be refractory, and withhold from Him our love: And, finally, because of the Infinite perfections of His nature, which render Him the proper object, on which our affections, should be chiefly placed; and which

exhibit Him as a Being worthy to be loved, supremely, by all His creatures.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" is the Second commandment of God. And we are expressly taught, by the Apostle John, that it must be obeyed, in order that God may be loved; in order, that obedience may be rendered to the first commandment. And we may further observe; that except we obey it, we cannot fear God, according to the requirement in the text.

It is indeed, made our duty, to love our fellow men, and to endeavor to promote their welfare, whether we be the objects of their love, or their hatred; whether they be our friends, or our enemies; whether we receive from them benefits or injuries.

That we should reciprocate the kindness of those who do us good, is evident, from reason, as well as Revelation.

That we should desire, and labor to promote, the interest of those who do us hurt is commanded. Says the Saviour; "Love your enemies: Bless them that curse you: Do good to them that hate you: And pray for them that despitefully use you; and persecute you."

We may indeed, give a preference to our Christian friends: For, says the apostle to the Galatians; "As we have opportunity, let us do good, unto all men, especially unto those who are of the household of faith."

His meaning manifestly is, that when we have favors to bestow, and cannot bestow them upon all men; or cannot distribute them to all our neighbors, or acquaintance; we are at liberty to select the professors of Christianity; those who live with us, in the bonds of Christian love; and to make them especially the objects of our Charity and favor.

In these cases, however, if our Christian friends have but little or no need of the favors that we can grant; whilst others are under great necessity; we ought, no doubt, generally, if not always, to relieve the most necessitous.

We are to do good to all, according to our ability, and opportunity.

We must not revenge for the injuries that we receive: For we read; "Thou shalt not avenge; nor bear any grudge."

This prohibition, however, is not, in our opinion, to prevent a legal redress, when

we are very seriously injured, in property, or character: For such redress, may be sought, without the feelings of revenge.

We should not, however, be very forward to redress our grievances; lest we be actuated by improper feelings, and wrong motives. We should be forbearing, and forgiving. We should not be too prompt to demand satisfaction. We should seek for peace, and reconciliation. We should take for our example, the Saviour, who, when reviled; reviled not again; and who was more anxious for the salvation of his persecutors, than for his own release from insult and suffering.

We are bound to treat our fellow men with gentleness, and kindness: To administer to their temporal and spiritual necessities: And to forgive them, as we hope to be forgiven of God.

A Third commandment of God, has a more particular reference to ourselves.

It forbids evil thoughts: For it says; "Gird up the loins of your mind; be sober; be vigilant." It prohibits evil speaking: For it enjoins; "Let no corrupt communication proceed, out of your mouth." It

also forbids intemperance, and licentiousness: For it says; "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

We are thus commanded to watch ourselves; and not to suffer our minds and our hearts to be corrupted by thoughts, and by words, which are vicious, criminal, and sinful: Nor by sinful, and forbidden pleasures.

It is therefore required of us; we are commanded; to live chastely, soberly, and temperately. And we must live as thus commanded, if we would fear God, according to the injunction in the text.

When we obey God's First commandment, by loving Him; and His Second commandment, by loving our fellow men; and also His requirement, His command, to be pure in our thoughts, our speech, and behavior; then, and not till then, shall we "fear" Him, as the text enjoins. Then, and not till then, shall we be obedient to His other commandments.

Secondly. We learn from reason; and the positive declarations of Scripture; that all men have sinned: That "there is not a just man upon Earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not:" That they have all, "come

short of the glory of God:" That they have violated His commands; broken His Law; and become guilty before Him.

We further learn, that "it is appointed unto men, once to die; and after this the judgment;" that they must indeed die; be raised from the Dead; "appear before the judgment seat of Christ;" and be judged, according to the deeds done in the body; that death, and the judgment, will be in consequence of sin; that the hidden things of darkness, will be brought to light; and the counsels of the heart be made manifest; that vengeance will be taken on those that know not God; that they will be punished, with Everlasting destruction; in short; that the wicked, who fear not God, and refuse to keep His commandments, will be turned into Hell.

We, therefore, inasmuch as we have gone contrary to the Law of God; inasmuch as we have violated His commands; must appear before the Judge of all the Earth; and when arraigned at His Tribunal, our guilt will be manifest.

How then shall we be delivered from His wrath? How shall we escape from the

punishment, due for our sins? By what means, shall we be able to be rescued from Eternal woe?

There is a way, and an only way of escape; and that is, through Christ, who, as we read, is the propitiation, for the sins of the World: And whom, as we further read, God has sent, that the world through him might be saved.

Christ has condescended to die, and to make his death, an atonement for the sin of men: So that through the merits of this death, or atonement, men may obtain forgiveness for their sin, pardon for their disobedience to God's commands, and be saved from future punishment.

But, in order to be pardoned and be saved, they must be spiritually changed in their nature: So changed, that they repent of their sin; that they have faith in God; in the Father; in the Son, who is Christ; in the Holy Spirit, who is the Holy Ghost: so changed, that they refrain from sinful conduct, and live righteously and Godly.

God's Grace, or assistance, bestowed upon them through the efficacy of the atonement in question, enables them to be thus

changed: Gives to them sufficient power to have the faith, the repentance and the righteousness, necessary for being saved: Endows them with ability to make the Propitiation or Atonement for their sin, effectual for their future happiness.

It is therefore vitally important, that we properly accept and improve the Grace given: That we so accept, and employ it, as to repent; "to bring forth works meet for repentance;" to have faith, and the other Christian graces; to be spiritually changed; to be holy in our hearts and our lives; in a word; "to fear God, and keep His commandments."

If we thus improve the help, the Grace, the assistance which comes from God; He will forgive; will justify us; and eventually save us from the misery, and bless us with the blessings of the future.

But if we refuse the aid, the help of the Holy Spirit, and continue to live in unrighteousness and sin, without obedience to God's commands; then will He subject us to condemnation, and to future punishment. Such is the doctrine of the Scripture.

Let us, therefore be divested of our

natural disposition; of our natural and carnal minds; of our impenitent, carnal and corrupt hearts; of our sinful propensities; of unbelief in the promises, and denunciations of the Gospel; of evil principles and practices; of disobedience to God, and uncharitableness to men; of evil speaking, and of evil thoughts: And on the other hand; let us be possessed of virtuous, pious, and religious qualities; Of good and holy desires; of principles that are righteous and upright; and let our actions, our moral deportment, be such as God approves; such as will afford proof, that we "fear God, and keep His commandments:" That we therefore belong to His Spiritual Family by "adoption," and are heirs to His Heavenly Inheritance.

If we be, as we should be, the Disciples of Christ; the servants of God: If we live, as we ought to live, in the fear of our Maker, and in obedience to His commandments; we indeed must, as we have already noticed, be changed in a spiritual manner; be "renewed, unto righteousness, and true holiness."

If thus renewed, we shall give evidence

of the renewal. We shall exhibit proof of our new and Christian character; by possessing and exercising love towards God, and towards men; by peforming our duty, both to Him, and to them; by being obedient to His will; and by keeping ourselves "unspotted from the World."

Prayer, and self denial; a devout attention to the ordinances of the Church; and the various qualities of piety and virtue, will characterize our life.

We shall press forward, ardently, and devotedly, "towards the mark of the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus." That is; we shall seek diligently, devotedly, and perseveringly, the salvation of our souls.

To this end, we shall endeavor, to live, "in all holy conversation and Godliness;" that when death shall approach us, we may be able, in the language of an apostle, to say, in relation to our Christian warfare, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me, a crown of righteousness."

My Hearers: We ought to examine our-

selves; and know, whether we be spiritually regenerated; renewed unto righteousness: Whether we be possessed of the Christian graces: Whether we be inwardly good, in our hearts, and outwardly righteous in our conduct: Whether we be living in the fear of God, and in obedience to His commands: Whether we be Christians, having a well grounded hope of happiness hereafter.

Surely; we should examine ourselves, that on the other hand we may know, whether we be living, as impenitent, and unrenewed sinners: alienated from God; having consciences that accuse us; following the fashions and seeking the vanities of the multitude; "without hope and without God in the World." Whether we be living, without Christian faith; without the consolations of the Holy Spirit; without genuine and true religion; and, consequently, without the prospect of a happy immortality.

O! Let us examine ourselves, that we may know our spiritual condition: That we may see it, as it is: That if we find ourselves religiously fearing God, and serv-

ing Him; we may persevere in our Christian course. That on the other hand, if we find ourselves unwilling to serve Him; living in disobedience to His commands; and destitute of the Christian graces; we may repent and reform, and find mercy.

Finally: Let us endeavor to "fear God, and keep His commandments;" and may we, eventually attain to salvation, and future happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON V.

THE CHRISTIAN RACE.

1 Corinthians ix. 24.

"So run, that ye may obtain."

The apostle, in this text of Scripture, compared the Christian life to a race. The Corinthians, to whom he wrote, could not but understand the force of the comparison; since they knew the nature of the Christian life, and of the race which he had in view.

This race, consisted, in running over a certain space of ground, to obtain as a prize, a crown made of herbs; or of the twigs, and foliage of leaves.

As he who engaged in running, was temperate in his diet, and in all his habits; and was accustomed to athletic exercises; and these means, had bodily activity and ngth, by which he was qualified to run:

So he who conforms his life to Christianity is habitually temperate, exercising himself, in the love, and the practice of piety and virtue; and has, thereby, the more spiritual ability, to live righteously; and to obtain as a prize, happiness in future: Happiness, which is figuratively termed "a crown of glory."

They who ran in the race, strove, also, with determined resolutions, to run successfully; and to receive the crown which was awarded to successful competitors in running. So they who live righteously, according to the requirements of the Christian religion, exert themselves with firm determinations to live in this manner, and to obtain the crown of glory, which, at the final day of judgment, will be bestowed on those, who through life, continue in well-doing.

We see then the meaning of the apostle in the text. He meant to admonish the Corinthians, that since they had embraced Christianity, they could continue to be Christians, and obtain a crown of happiness in future, in no other way, than by being perseveringly, and resolutely pious, and

Religious: In no other way, than by being as virtuous, and as practically good, as he who ran in the Isthmian race, was active in his body, and inflexible in his purpose, that he might receive a garland, or crown made of evergreens.

The text, though written originally for the Christians at Corinth, is applicable to all other Christians: And its author, no doubt, intended it, and all his other writings in the New Testament, for the benefit of all professing Christianity, in his own time; and in all subsequent periods of the world.

As it represents the Christian life, under the similitude of a race, we may consider that life, under this similitude, in several points of view.

In the Olympian, the Pythian, the Nemean, and Isthmian races, in which the prize, was a crown of wild olive, of laurel, of parsely, or of pine; he who ran, was not at liberty to choose his ground. It was selected by others. His course was marked out for him, and he pursued it where others had directed, or he was not entitled to the prize. In other races, they who have run, have been placed under similar restrictions.

In this respect we find, that between the Christian life, and a race, there is a great resemblance: For that life, is not founded upon principles, by which men naturally prefer to be governed. Nor is it practically, a life which they naturally choose, in preference to another course of living.

It is a life, called emphatically, "the way of God's commandments." These commandments, are the principles, from which it emanates: The rules; by which, in a practical point of view it is influenced.

We perceive, therefore, that as men, appointed for the purpose, select the ground, and direct the course of a race; so God prescribes the commandments, to which the Christian life must conform.

As he, who, in running, varies from the appointed course, is not entitled to the prize, although he may be more active than his competitors, and reach the end of the course before them; so he who disregards God's commands, is not entitled to the reward of the Christian life; although, in some respects, he may, apparently excel, in his conduct, many who are professedly, and really religious. His disregard of the Di-

vine commands, is proof, that his motives, in whatever light, he himself may view them, are incorrect: And that his conduct, inasmuch as it proceeds from these motives, and deviates from those commands, is defective, in a high degree; however excellent, in many points of view, it may appear to himself, and to the world.

Activity in running, is not sufficient for the victory. Adherence to lawful and acknowledged rules, is indispensable. The course must be kept. No deviation from it is allowed. So also, something more than apparent zeal for living the Christian life is requisite. This zeal should not only be apparent but real. It should be tempered, and regulated, by what God has enjoined. It should be, not according to fanaticism; but to knowledge. It should be that, which inclines those who possess it, their principles, and their conduct, to "the way of God's commandments." They who would lead the Christian life, are not permitted to wander from this way. They should heed the admonition; "ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established: Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left:

Remove thy foot from evil." They should not refuse the way, in which God has directed them to walk; nor by false reasoning; or by their own humor, or caprice, be led into paths, not prescribed by His word. They should never imitate the sin of Saul, who boasted, that he had performed the commandment of the Lord, when he had not performed it: Who, in preserving the cattle of the Amalekites alive, violated that commandment, under a pretense of honoring the Lord by sacrifice. He had no right, to substitute sacrifice for obedience. Nor have any a right, at any time, to plead, that their prayers, their religious labors, or their charitable deeds, can exempt them from obedience in other things, which God positively commands.

If then, they disobey Him, by disregarding the ministry, the worship, the doctrines, and the Sacraments of His Church; where is their excuse? Will they plead that they pray? That they labor to promote piety, virtue, and happiness in themselves, and others? Are there not too many, who are unable, with any semblance of truth, thus to plead? And what will be, ultimately

said to this plea, by the Judge of all? Will He not say; "these things, ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone?"

It is obvious, from the whole tenor of the Scripture; that God commands men to live righteously. Is it not, then expedient? Is it not all-important; that they be penitent, and prayerful? That they have faith in God; in His word; in Christ; in the Holy Spirit? That they submit to the Divine Institutions of the Church? And be holy, in their disposition, and righteous, in their lives? In a word; That they live a Christian life?

To continue the similitude contained in the text, we may also observe, that as a race, is swift, and constant progression, over a space of ground, of a determinate, and certain length; and is never interrupted, without danger, of losing, both the victory and the prize: So the Christian life, is an immediate, a progressive, and continued course, of holy and righteous living, for a certain time, which terminates by death; and during this time, is not discontinued for a day, or a moment, without hazarding the

loss of happiness, which is "a crown of glory;" and to which, Christians should aspire. They should therefore, be watchful, and prayerful; spiritually industrious, and persevering; that their holy living, may not cease; or be retarded in its progress.

A race, must not only be begun, but be finished; or the prize, can never be obtained. To run a little way, and then to abandon the enterprise, is of no avail. He who runs, must pass through the whole course, or he can never be successful. If he begin, and then relinquish his attempts, he is considered as not having run. Nay he is disparaged for his inactivity, and want of courage.

In like manner; the Christian life, must not only be commenced; it must be continued; or its "crown of glory," can never be possessed. To enter on it, and then to forsake it, is a profitless, and unavailing effort. He who embraces it, must hold it fast till his death: Must persevere in it, during his probation in this world, or he will fail of the proffered happiness to which it leads. He who professes it, and endeavors to discharge its duties, for a little while,

and then suffers himself to be diverted from his purpose; is accounted as having never undertaken to fulfill its obligations. He is disparaged, in the estimation of himself, and others; and in the sight of God; and is justly reproached, for his irresolution, and his slothfulness: And in the final day of account, when retributive justice shall be dispensed, what can he expect from his Judge, but a condemnatory sentence, prohibiting him, and all who have neglected to live a Christian life, from the "crown of glory;" to which a title, may now be acquired; but which will then be unattainable, except by those, who, during their Earthly existence, have by patience, and perseverance, in well-doing, sustained the Christian character? To make but a temporary profession of Christianity; is not the way to salvation, and to happiness. Says an apostle; "behold, we count them happy, that endure." Says the Saviour; "he that endureth to the end, shall be saved."

As they who contended for the prize, in the Ancient races, were liable to break their limbs, by falling; and to die by exhaustion;

and were often injured by other accidents; but, for the most part, strove, to the utmost, to gain the victory, notwithstanding: So they who are truly Christians; although they are subject to many trials, and adversities; should nevertheless, persevere, with patience, and steadfastness, in their duty.

This duty consists, in doing cheerfully, whatever God commands: And in bearing patiently, the afflictions that He sends. That they may know what it is, and be inclined to perform it, they should improve and exercise their reason, their understanding, and their other mental powers: And should search with diligence, the Scriptures: Should submit to the influence, which the Holy Spirit exerts on their minds, and their hearts: Should cultivate a meek, a humble, a patient, a firm, an equable disposition: And should pray for the Divine assistance; like the Psalmist, when he said; "Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes."—"Incline my heart, unto thy testimonies."

We ought to observe; that although, in many respects, a resemblance obtains, between a race, and the Christian life; yet, in several particulars, the resemblance dis-

appears. For instance: Many who are engaged in a race, often persevere to the end of it; whilst none but the foremost; he only, who completes the course first, can receive the prize. But every one, that continues, steadfastly to lead a Christian life, will be saved: Will be crowned, with a crown of glory.

Among the competitors, in a race, there is jealousy. They would gladly be a hindrance to each other. They rejoice at each other's misfortunes: And he, to whom the prize is awarded, is envied by his fellows. But among Christians, there is neither jealousy, nor envy. They strive to assist; not to injure, one another. They regret the misfortunes, and by every means in their power, endeavor to promote the success, of their Brethren. They pray, that happiness, the Heavenly crown; the crown of glory, may be awarded not only to themselves but to others. They sympathize with a suffering world. They desire the temporal, and spiritual good of men: And they labor for the Eternal welfare of all.

In a race, there is nothing but labor, and *toil, and a* painful uneasiness, until the prize

is obtained. And whilst that bestows upon the victor, no real and true good; they who have lost it, are vexed at their loss: So that not only they who are vanquished, but they who are victorious in a race, find in it no real benefit, or satisfaction.

The Christian life, however, carries a part of its reward along with it. It gives present comfort: Immediate consolation. It affords spiritual peace, and satisfaction, which are now enjoyed. It furnishes a hope, which is fraught with joy in this world; and which will be fully realized, by the enjoyments, of the world to come.

But a race, though failing in some particulars, to resemble the Christian life; nevertheless, resembles such a life, in so many instances, that the life in question, may well be termed, as the apostle, evidently intends to term it, in the text, the Christian Race.

That we may run this race, as we ought; rightly, properly, and successfully; let us consider the Infinite value of the prize for which we run. Let us also consider, that we are surrounded by many, by whom, our conduct is watched, and traced to the prin-

ciples, from which it emanates: Principles by which we are actuated.

We are indeed surrounded and observed, not only by our fellow-men, both Christians, and others: But by the Angels of Heaven; and the Powers of darkness. Above all; God, who is acquainted with our thoughts; with every motive of our hearts, is beholding us. Shall we not then be stimulated to acquit ourselves properly? To "so run, that" we "may obtain?" To so live, that we may receive that crown, which is the object of the Christian life? "Wherefore," as an apostle observes, "seeing we"—"are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us; and let us run with patience, the race that is set before us."

Let us be encouraged by the consideration, that many who have run the Christian race, are inheritors of the Heavenly crown; which is the prize, the reward of their Earthly toils: And that we, if like them, we perform our duty on the Earth; if we "run with patience the race that is set *before us*," shall eventually be admitted to

their society in the Heavenly Mansions; and there be crowned with the same Heavenly crown.

Is it not cheering to reflect, that Christians are our fellow-travelers, affording us good company, whilst by living the Christian life, we are running our appointed race towards Heaven; where the prize is reserved for us, if we prove ourselves worthy of its enjoyment?

We have a faithful, kind and unerring guide; even God, who if we trust to Him, will, by the influence of His Holy Spirit, through the merits of our Saviour Christ, keep our feet in the proper course, and not suffer them to slip: And will enable us to "so run, that," we "may obtain" the crown of glory; even Eternal happiness.

But God will guide us by His Spirit; He will keep our feet from slipping, only on condition that we obey Him. Except we perform this condition, we can never lay any just claim to His guidance: Nor will He condescend to be our guide.

To trust in God, implies, that we yield Him our obedience. Without such obedience, we are not privileged: We are not

able; to trust in Him as our helper, our guide, our protector, and defender.

But if we obey His commands; then may we trust in Him: And He will assist us in our Christian race. He will defend us from our spiritual enemies. He will lead us in the path of duty; and the way to Heaven.

Let us, therefore, endeavor to run the Christian race, rightly, and perseveringly; by obeying God: By serving Him with fidelity; By trusting in Him as our guide, and protector: And by a faithful performance of our duty, according to His requirements.

Thus let the loins of our minds, be girded about; and by doing and suffering, what is according to His will; let us so run, that we may finish our course, as the great apostle to the Gentiles, desired to finish his, "with joy:" So that we may obtain, not a fading, but an unfading; not a corruptible, but an incorruptible; not a perishing and Earthly; but an Eternal, and Heavenly crown. Amen.

SERMON VI.

THE FOLLY OF ATHEISM.

Psalm xiv. 1.

"THE FOOL HATH SAID IN HIS HEART, THERE IS NO GOD."

IN the Scripture, the term fool, is employed to signify one who is vicious and wicked; who abuses his Spiritual privileges; who suffers his intellectual faculties to be perverted, in relation to his duty; and who refuses, or is unwilling to be impressed with a just sense of the Divine character.

He "hath said in his heart, there is no God:" That is, he doubts the existence of the Creator; or endeavors to persuade himself, that there is no such Being; and consequently, no Dispenser of happiness, and misery.

There are many, who oftentimes doubt in this manner. Wishing to be free from all

moral restraint, they deceive themselves, hoping that there is no Supreme Being to bring them into judgment.

They ought to break the chains of their delusion: To believe and confess the existence of Almighty God: And to consider Him as the rewarder of the good, and the punisher of the bad.

A belief in His existence, is the very foundation of all true religion. We must believe in Him, or we can never love and obey Him as we ought; and perform the duty, which He requires us to perform.

We are not required to believe in Him without evidence, that our belief is correct; founded in the truth. For the Earth and the other parts of the Universe, exhibit proof of His existence: Proof that He created them: That they are His workmanship.

The testimony of the Scripture coincides, in this respect, with the testimony of the material creation: For, to the inquiry, who is the author of this Creation; the Scripture responds; that God is the Author.

In the language of the Scripture, the Patriarch Job, represents God as saying,

"I laid the foundations of the Earth." And the Prophet Jeremiah says: "To whom will ye liken God?"—"It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the Earth;"—"that stretcheth out the Heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in."

Job speaking of God, further says; "By His Spirit, He hath garnished the Heavens." And Moses, commences the Pentateuch by saying; that "God created the Heaven and the Earth."

Moses likewise informs us, that God created men: That He made their bodies, and their souls. And Saint Paul declares; that "God made the world and all things therein:"—That "He is Lord of Heaven and Earth:"—That "He hath made of one blood, all nations of men:" And, that the various works of creation, "proclaim His Eternal power and Godhead."

In the Scripture, the Atheist is therefore termed a fool; because he denies what the Scripture asserts; and what the works of creation make manifest.

How can any be so impious and foolish, as to disbelieve in God; since His works are exhibited to view; and since the Scrip-

tures represent Him, not only as existing; but as being the Creator of all things, "visible, and invisible?"

Indeed, we may well exclaim with the Psalmist: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works. In wisdom hast thou made them all. The Earth is full of thy riches. The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Firmament showeth His handiwork."

Conscience; is also a proof, of God's Eternal, and immutable existence. The accusations, or compunctions of conscience; and the fears connected with such accusations, are so many witnesses, that however much, many, may doubt and deny that God exists, yet, that they have certain and fearful apprehensions concerning Him, as a real Being; and concerning His retributive and sure justice. "Every one that finds me, shall slay me," was the language of Cain: And without doubt, his language was prompted by a guilty conscience, portraying to his thoughts, a just and offended God, whose law he had broken; and who, he was apprehensive, might punish him by the hands of men.

The like apprehensions are often felt by

those whose consciences accuse them of crimes. They are haunted with terrors. They are filled with fears. They are afraid of God. Thus they confess Him: Although in conduct, and frequently in thought, they deny Him. The impious Belshazzar, was so overpowered by fear, when he saw "the hand-writing," "on the wall," that his countenance was changed: And the sentiment of an Apostle is, that there is a Law, written by the finger of God, on the hearts of men; so that their consciences excuse them whenever they observe that law; but accuse them, whenever they are guilty of its violation; or non-observance. Even the conscience of Pharaoh, was made to yield; and to accuse him: And he sent for Moses and Aaron, and said to them; "I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Entreat the Lord, for it is enough, that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer." Thus the satisfaction, the happiness, attending the approval of conscience; and the fear connected with its disapproval; its disapprobation, are proofs, that there is a

God, to judge; to reward and punish: And the atheist conducts foolishly, by doing violence to his conscience: By refusing to acknowledge, what his conscience declares to be true.

Another evidence of God's real Being, is the common consent of all nations, civilized and barbarous, to His existence. This universal belief in Him, is the voice of God Himself. It is the testimony of reason. It is the language of nature. Surely, therefore, it is folly to deny, what God Himself has implanted, has interwoven, in the nature, the minds, and the consciences of all.

Extraordinary judgments, are also evidence of God's existence: Especially when the judgment is plainly suited to the sin, and the sin is made apparent by the judgment. Says the Psalmist; "the Lord, is known by the judgment which He executeth." Herod Agrippa, for receiving the applause of the people, and impiously endeavoring to fancy himself a God, was smitten with disease and death. When Adonibezek, was treated with cruelty, he said; "as I have done; so God hath requited me." How foolish and hazardous it

is to dishonor God, by denying His existence, since He is able, and ready to punish for infidelity: And since the most atheistical, like Adonibezek and Pharaoh, are occasionally obliged to acknowledge Him: To confess His authority and justice; His judgments, and His attributes.

Also Prophecy, and its fulfillment, afford further evidence, that God exists. The power of foretelling events, which are to occur, in future time, belongs not to a finite being like man, but to a Being Infinitely intelligent; as God. Hence God says of Himself, "I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning; and from Ancient times, the things that are not." He often delegates, however, His Prophetic power, to certain men, whom He chooses for His Prophets. For instance, He enabled the Prophet Daniel, to foretell the victories, and the conquests of Alexander; and to speak of the Grecian, and the Roman Empires, before they had arisen. He caused Isaiah to prophecy of Cyrus, long before that monarch was in the world: And He gave power to many of His Ancient prophets, to foretell of Christ; and of

Christ's Spiritual kingdom. By giving, by delegating to chosen persons, the spirit, and the power of prophecying, He proves, He makes manifest, the Being and the power of Himself; that men may acknowledge Him, according to His words, when He says, "I am the Lord, and there is none else: There is no God besides me."—What folly, therefore it is to deny Him.

Miraculous performances, are additional proofs of His Being: For surely, nothing can change the laws of nature, and produce miraculous effects, but God, who made those laws, and who can continue, suspend, modify, or destroy them, at His pleasure. He sometimes lends His miraculous ability or power, to certain men. For instance, He gave to Moses, authority and power, to divide, in a miraculous manner, the waters of the Red Sea. He enabled Joshua, to stay the river Jordan in its channel; and Elijah, and Elisha, each of them, to raise a dead person to life: And the Saviour exercising the miraculous, and Infinite power of God, healed the sick; cleansed the lepers; raised the dead; and cast out devils. Many Prophets; and many Apostles of Christianity,

have also been clothed with the power of working miracles, in proof of the truth of Christianity; and of the existence, the omnipotence, and beneficence of Almighty God.

God's existence, is also proved by His ordinary, as well as by His special Providence,—by His Providential acts, which are constantly occurring, both in the natural, and moral world.

Now; since He is proved to exist, by the universal consent and belief of all nations: By the extraordinary judgments which He occasionally executes: By Miracles: By Prophecies: By the power and effects of conscience: By the Scriptures: By His Providence, not only special, but ordinary: And by His creation of Angels, and of men, and the Universe; in a word, His creation of all things spiritual, and material; How important it is; how greatly it becomes mankind to acknowledge Him—to confess His existence, His sovereignty, His attributes, and character.

If He can be seen in His creation: If He is proved to exist by His works; it is not only allowable, but commendable, to

study the nature, and the laws of material, and spiritual things, the workmanship of His hands. These things are indeed His creation; His works; "the heralds of His glory."—"The Lord," says the Psalmist, "shall rejoice in His works." Hence, we may rejoice in the same. And the more we are acquainted with them, the more rationally, religiously, and piously, we shall be enabled to rejoice. The more we know of God, the more shall we be convinced of our duty to acknowledge Him; and to yield obedience to His commands. And He has commanded us to believe in Him; to fear, to love, to worship, and obey Him.—He has also commanded us, to be "friendly affectioned" towards one another; to do to our fellow-men as we wish them to do to us; to love our neighbors as ourselves; in short, to do good to all men, according to our ability, and opportunity; and especially to those who are of the household of faith; that is, to those who are truly Christians. Finally, He has commanded us to be sober, temperate, and chaste; in other words; to possess, and preserve in ourselves, purity;—purity of thought, purity of speech, and purity of

conduct.—For being obedient to His commands, He promises a reward, to some extent, in the present world; and to an extent, that will be greater, and beyond our present comprehension, in a world to come. But for being disobedient to what He has commanded, He promises, with repeated threatenings, the most certain punishment, to some extent here; and to a greater and awfully severe extent, hereafter. He informs us, and all men, that we and they will die; and afterwards, at the end of the world, be revived into life again, and be judged by Him; and then, that He will dispose, irreversibly, of each individual, according to the character and conduct of such individual before death.

It is recorded, that "to fear God, and keep His commandments, is the whole duty of man." According to the sentiment of an apostle, "to fear God, and keep His commandments," is "our reasonable service." Should not we, and others, therefore, perform this service? This imperative, and all-important duty? And especially, since the destiny of every person, for happiness, or woe, depends on performing, or not

performing the duty under consideration? Indeed, we and others should believe in God; and should aspire to correct, and exalted views of His character; and should endeavor, sincerely, and unremittingly to obey Him.

Let those who profess to believe in God, avoid the foolishness, and atheism, which consist, in principles, and motives; propensities, and practices, that are sinful. If they neglect the worship of God; if they refuse or neglect to love and fear Him; if they show a dislike, or negligence for His service; if they are guilty of vicious, and sinful practices and habits; if they refuse to possess, and exercise love and benevolence towards their fellow-men; if they fail to be possessed of purity and virtue in themselves; their conduct will evince, that although, they are not professedly, yet that they are really, and practically atheistical. To those who thus conduct, professing to believe in God, but denying Him in their works, their practices; the words of the apostle to Titus, are applicable. "They profess, that they know God, but in works, they deny Him, being abominable, and

disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

Men's practices, are the best expositors of their principles; and if they truly believe in God, they will be inclined to love, and fear; adore, and reverence; worship, and obey; honor, and praise, and glorify Him; seeking to perform His will.

Is it not because, certain individuals, disbelieve in God; because they are tainted with atheism, that they are so remiss, in moral and Religious duties? Let those, therefore, who cling to their unbelief, listen to the text, and learn their character. Let them forsake their unrighteous thoughts, and their evil ways. Let them believe in God and do as He commands. It is folly to deny Him: And consequently folly, not to worship Him, and not to yield Him due obedience.

Since we, my Christian Brethren, profess to believe in God; let us take heed to ourselves, that our belief be genuine, according to our profession; and that our conduct, our moral deportment, correspond with our profession and belief.

It is our duty; it is the duty of all, to

believe in God: In the Father: In tl Son: In the Holy Spirit: In God's r vealed word as recorded in the Scripture In His government and law: In His Pr vidence and Holy character; And in H promised dispensation of rewards and punishment in a future world. It is o duty; it is the duty of all men, to repen and to bring forth works meet for reper ance; to be possessed of a holy dispositio and to live holy lives;—to live soberl righteously and Godly: And thus to fi deliverance from punishment, and attain happiness, beyond the grave, in the wor to come.

Let us, therefore, my hearers, throu faith in God, repentance for our sins, a righteousness of life, during our probatio ary state on the Earth, strive to perfor our duty, and thus to be prepared for deat for the judgment, and Eternity: And whe at the great day of account, we shall appe at the tribunal of Him who created us, ma we receive from Him an approving se tence; and, may we be admitted by Hi to the Heavenly mansions, prepared b Himself for the righteous. Amen.

SERMON VII.

NON-CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD, AND THE RENEWING OF THE MIND.

Romans xii. 7.

"AND BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD: BUT BE YE TRANSFORMED, BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND; THAT YE MAY PROVE, WHAT IS THAT GOOD, AND ACCEPTABLE, AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD."

WHEN we look abroad amongst mankind, and view the busy scenes, in which they are engaged; we cannot but perceive, that happiness is the object of all their pursuits.

Whatever stations they occupy in society; whether they be in Public or in private life; whether they be in any way distinguished above others, or accounted as belonging to the lower ranks of people: Whether riches or poverty be their portion: In short; in whatever condition we find them; they are all inquiring, and pursuing after happiness; striving for its attainment.

But after all their inquiry and their strife: After all their experiments for obtaining what they so much desire; they meet with continual perplexity and disappointment, except they cease to be conformed to this world: Except they become transformed by the renewing of their minds: In other words; except they embrace religion, which affords proof to those, who possess it, that it is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God, which is mentioned in the text, and which is the sure, and the only means, to be employed, for being happy.

In vain do the irreligious expect to find happiness, by being conformed to the world. By pursuing the paths of intemperance, or forbidden pleasure: Of pride, ambition, or other evil passions: Of riches, or of Earthly power: Of philosophy or science: Of fashion or refinement; or of Personal accomplishments: Of fame, for their wisdom or their talents: Or, of any other things of an Earthly nature.

They employ every method, that their ingenuity can devise, to possess the things of the world: And they hope to be happy

by the possession. But they are perpetually disappointed: Often, by not obtaining the things in question, with as much success, as they expected: And; frequently, by not receiving from these things when obtained, that enjoyment and satisfaction, which they anticipated. Thwarted in their plans for obtaining; and in their expectations of enjoying, what they incessantly and ardently desire; they are forever disquieted and vexed: Forever at a distance from happiness, the object of their toils.

Why should they employ so much ingenuity and enterprise? Why should they have recourse to so many plans and stratagems; for possessions of this nature? Possessions which so often elude their grasp; which when obtained, are fraught, with no unmixed joy; but generally with an evil influence; with deleterious effects, on the mind and affections.

These possessions, are also not only difficult, in many cases, to be obtained; and unsatisfying and corrupting in their nature; but extremely uncertain in continuance. "Riches fly away." "Beauty soon fades." Disease and old age, obliterate intellectual

acquirements from the mind; and death soon terminates the life, and all Earthly enjoyments of men; and ere long, as the Scriptures inform us, the Earth, and all that pertains to it will be destroyed. Oh! how short-lived and perishing are men; and all that they possess! The world, and all that it affords!

The wicked, who are "conformed to the world," have their glory in Earthly things. But they will perish with their glory.

The righteous, who are "transformed, by the renewing of the mind," glory in things which are spiritual and Heavenly. They indeed, as they are in duty bound, have a due regard, for those temporal or Earthly things which God has designed, for the well-being, the comfort, and the benefit of man. Hence they consider their life; their habitation in the present world; their faculties of soul, and of body; their improvements in proper knowledge; their lawfully acquired property; and all their innocent and lawful enjoyments, to be good and valuable gifts of the Creator: Gifts which He designs to be thankfully received.

A difference between the two classes of

persons is, that the Former, the wicked, indulge in vicious, and in sinful propensities; and misimprove and abuse, the Earthly blessings, which God in His beneficence bestows: Whilst the Latter, the righteous, restrain such propensities; and rightly use, and improve these blessings.

Another difference is, that the former class of persons, the wicked, reject the spiritual assistance, which God, through Christ, is continually proffering, and giving, to all men. They, therefore die in their sins, and sink to perdition:—Whilst the latter class, the righteous, by adhering to the principles and practices of the true religion, receive the assistance in question, and thereby become, comparatively holy and happy, in this world; so that they will be blessed, with unalloyed holiness and happiness, in the world to come.

"Be not conformed to this world."—This command, is not to prevent us from the enjoyment of life, and of health; of cultivated minds, and of social society; of Earthly honors and estates rightly and properly obtained; of temporal conveniences and comforts; and of many other things,

which may be considered as things of the world: But it is to restrain us from loving these things too excessively; since God should be the Supreme object of our affections. It is to keep us from using the things of the world intemperately; and from allowing them thus to be instrumental of our unhappiness: For they are designed by their Bountiful Author, to be, by the provident and sober use which we should make of them, so many aids to our well-being: And, finally, it is to preserve us from the sin of considering them as the source of all happiness; since God, should be regarded, as our chief good; as the ultimate cause of our present and Eternal welfare.

"Be not conformed to this world." That is; we must subdue all malicious, covetous, licentious, and other wicked passions within us. In other words, we must, by the Grace which God, through the efficacy of Christ's death bestows upon us, overcome that depravity of our nature, which originated in the apostacy of our first parents, and which is increased, by our own voluntary transgression of the law of God.

"Be not conformed to this world." That is to say: By the Grace given, we must not only conquer our corrupt nature, by which means, we shall experience a renewal of our minds: We must not only use the things of the world, "as not abusing them;" and in so doing, be, by virtue of that renewal, transformed in our conduct, in relation to these things; but we must be so transformed as to have a firm and unwavering Faith in the existence, the character, and attributes of God: In the Father as our Creator; in His Son Jesus Christ as our Redeemer; in the Holy Spirit as the Comforter and Sanctifier of the good; and in all the doctrines of the true religion: So transformed as to profess and practice according to these doctrines, and to that faith, living "soberly, righteously and Godly."

Hence the command, "Be not conformed to this world;" means, literally, that we love not the world, nor the things which are in it immoderately: For in this point of view they are sinful: But that we use the world, and such of its things, as are intended for us, innocently, soberly, and thankfully; for in this view of them they

290822

are good for us, by helping us to place our affections, and dependence upon Him, by whom they are bestowed. And the command means, impliedly; that by Divine help, which is God's Grace, or the assistance of His Spirit, and which He gives through Christ, to all men, we be renewed, by eradicating our evil desires, and by becoming holy in our nature. Also that we become transformed, by having faith in God, and His promises; by embracing Christianity, and conducting according to its precepts. The whole meaning of the command, therefore, is, that in our nature, our conduct, and belief, we cease to be unholy; and become practically good; discharging our duty to God, our fellow-men, and ourselves.

Considered, both in its literal and constructive sense, it is, consequently, of the same import, as the injunction: "Be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind." For, to be renewed in the mind, is, as we have seen, to be divested of our depraved nature, and to possess a nature which is holy. And to be transformed in consequence of being so renewed, is, as we have also seen, to adhere to the Faith, and the

Doctrines of Christianity: To govern our thoughts, our belief, our speech, and behaviour, by the principles of this Religion.

By adhering steadfastly to the faith and the doctrines; and by practicing according to the requirements; of this religion; and by no other means, we shall be able to be delivered from a conformity to the world; to be renewed in our minds; to be transformed in the conduct of our lives; and to lay up for ourselves, Spiritual riches, even endless joys; in the Mansions of that Spiritual Building of God, "that House not made with hands, Eternal in the Heavens."

We shall also prove this religion, to be "that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," to which the apostle, in the text alludes. We shall prove it to be the will of God; for we shall have an experimental knowledge, of its being according to His purpose and determination. Also to be good for us; for we shall feel and know, that it gives us Spiritual consolation; a consolation to be derived from no other source. Likewise to be acceptable to our feelings, and our minds; for we shall receive and enjoy it with pleasure. And, finally,

to be perfect; for we shall have the assurance, that it will lead us to perfect and endless blessedness.

As this religion is the will of God; as it is good for those who practice it; as it is to them acceptable; as it is perfect in its results; we should not only embrace it ourselves, but endeavor to persuade others to embrace it; and for this purpose, we should, at proper times, and on suitable occasions, describe to them the duty and the benefits of professing and of practicing according to its requirements.

It delivers those who adhere to it, from the character and condition of the wicked, who, resisting the operations of God's Holy Spirit, on their minds, and their hearts, remain unrenewed and carnal in their nature; and continue to be conformed to the world, by abusing the good things of it, by yielding to its temptations; by indulging in its vanities; and are consequently walking in the road to destruction; although, in their own imagination, they often flatter themselves, that they are in the sure path of happiness.

This Religion, indeed, overcomes, in its

possessors, that depravity of nature, and that wickedness of conduct, with which they are tainted, by actual and hereditary sin. It renews in them, that holiness of heart, and of life, which, by means of such sin, they have lost. Without it, they are the Servants of Satan. By embracing it, they become God's servants. It restores to them, that title to happiness, which they have forfeited, by transgressing the Divine Law. In short, it so changes them, inwardly in their hearts, and outwardly in their actions, that they are converted from a state of sin and misery, to a state of righteousness, and enduring glory.

They who are strangers to it, are too apt to view it, as an austere service: As casting a gloomy and melancholy shade over life: And as an enemy to their peace and comfort. But they who are acquainted with it find, that it is, to them, the true source of peace and of joy. That by the restraints, it imposes, their happiness is secured. That it is promotive, both of their temporal and spiritual good; and of their Eternal interest. It inspires within them, that goodness, and benevolence; that cheerfulness, and

purity of sentiment, which are favorable to health, and to the proper enjoyment of all Earthly blessings: And gives them a foretaste of those purer, and sublimer enjoyments, which, if they persevere, in well-doing, they are destined to realize in future.

It gives to the intellectual powers, their best, and happiest exercise. It employs, for instance, our reason, in the contemplation of God, and the perfections of His nature; of His works, as displayed in His material, and Spiritual creation; of His acts of justice, and of mercy, in prescribing for us a most perfect law; and of redeeming us, through Christ, from the penalty of that law, on terms which are proffered in the Gospel. Without religion, the conclusions of reason, are frequently false; and the principal pleasures to be derived, from this faculty of the mind, are not experienced.

Religion also purifies and regulates the affections. It especially gives proper action to that love of God, and of man, in which, the Divine Law is briefly comprehended. It leads us to reflect, that God is the cause of all that is great and excellent in the Universe; of all our bodily, and mental

endowments; of all the temporal, and spiritual good that we enjoy. By these means, it inspires, and improves that love for Him, of which they who have not been spiritually renewed, are destitute; and from which proceeds a satisfaction Infinitely superior, to all the enjoyments of the unrighteous.

It likewise occasions us to consider, that our fellow-men, are our brethren; that we and they are children of the same Divine Parent, subject to the same Divine Law, and to be judged by the same Divine Rules of Eternal justice. Hence, it excites in us a desire for their happiness. This desire, is that love which we are commanded to have for them; by which we are influenced to treat them with kindness; to avoid strife and contention with them; to live with them in harmony and peace; to be indulgent towards them for their frailty and imperfections; to sympathize with them in their adversities and sorrows; to forgive them, when they injure us; to pray for their welfare, and to endeavor to promote it, by such means as are placed in our power. By treating them in this manner, we feel in our bosoms, a joy which we can-

not feel, if, swayed by irreligion, we shall be, in our intercourse with them, uncharitable, and unforgiving; envious, contentious, and unkind.

But religion, not only subdues licentiousness, avarice, ambition and revenge, and other bad passions; not only affords to the affections, that temperate indulgence, which is innocent and profitable; and at the same time restrains from excess; not only contributes to health, and the comfortable enjoyment of life, by virtuous and sober practices and habits; but it is also the source, from which emanates a good, and a right conscience. Such a conscience, the wicked and irreligious, are unable to possess. They are prevented from possessing it, by their sins, their follies, and their fears. The Religious and the good, are indeed, at times guilty, inadvertently, of doing wrong. They are, occasionally led by their frailties, from the path of duty. But repentance, through which they receive the Divine forgiveness, brings them back to that path; and restores to them their peace of conscience. But the wicked are without repentance. They are, therefore, by a guilty conscience, continually troubled, and self-condemned.

Religion affords the most precious consolation, at the time of death. It then gives spiritual joy and gladness, to the pious and dying soul, which is leaving its tenement of clay, to converse with new scenes, and new companions in Eternity. These consolations, we are constrained, by the teaching of the Book of God, to say, are withheld from the irreligious, the impenitent and unrighteous.

Whilst the vicious pleasures of those who are not transformed into the spiritual image of God, are often difficult to be obtained; corroding in their nature; and uncertain in continuance: The comforts of Religion, are always present, permanent, enduring, satisfactory. They are secure against the changes, and the chances of this world. In them, there is no instability. They are a treasure, that can never be exhausted.

The Dispensations of Providence, may afflict the Christian: May take from him, his Earthly goods: May permit the tongue of calumny, to wound his character: May remove from his society, his Relatives and friends: Or allow him to be otherwise distressed. But notwithstanding these things,

his religion shields him from unhappiness. His joy, is beyond the reach of the vicissitudes of time. Amidst reproaches, and distresses, it is unfading: For it is Spiritual and Heavenly.

Indeed, his afflictions, chasten, and purify him; and make him more obedient to the Divine will; and are therefore, ultimately for his good. He has imperishable hopes and propects beyond the grave. Nay; beyond the existence of the Universe. For he is assured, that a blessed immortality awaits him.

He knows that he must die, and rise again; and appear at the tribunal of Him, who is the "Judge of Quick and Dead." But, instead of being affected with horror, he rejoices; for he looks forward to the happy existence to which, he is destined beyond these occurrences.

A due consideration of the subject before us, should bring us to the resolution, of seeking after happiness, not in the corrupting and transitory pleasures of the world, in which, multitudes are seeking it; and which, like the phantoms of a dream, are so many deceptions; but in the Christian reli-

gion, in which it may be found; and which, if we practice it, will conduct us to "the Paradise above."

This Religion requires, that we sustain the Christian character, by being spiritually renewed: By spiritually dying unto sin, and living unto righteousness: And that we make without shame, a profession of that character, by receiving Christian Baptism: By being members of Christ's Spiritual body, the Church: And by holding communion with God, through a devout celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

As God has given us mental ability for the improvement of our minds: As He has given us bodily strength, for the performance of manual labor: So by the influence of His Spirit, through the merits of Christ crucified, He has given us Spiritual strength or ability, to forsake our conformity to the world; to be transformed by the renewing of our minds; in a word; to embrace Christianity and obey its precepts.

We should therefore embrace this religion. We should not wait for Him to imbue us with it, without our own exertions. If we refuse to exert those powers

of the mind, and the body, with which He has endowed us, He will not instruct us in human knowledge; nor will He perform for us, the ordinary work of our hands. So if we refuse to exert the spiritual ability, with which, through Christ, He has endowed us; He will not imbue us with religion.

He has supplied us with means, for embracing Christianity; and for being happy. Let us, therefore, employ these means; remembering that His injunction is: "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove, what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Amen.

SERMON VIII.

PRIDE.

Daniel iv. 37.

"AND THOSE THAT WALK IN PRIDE, HE IS ABLE TO ABASE."

SUCH was the language, the acknowledgment of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, when restored to his royal authority and his reason, of which he had been for seven years, Providentially deprived; to degrade him, and thereby to divest him of his pride: To humble and abase him; and to make him sensible of his dependence upon God.

Pride, is the high opinion, which a person forms, and desires others to entertain, of himself, on account of some excellence, of which he is possessed, or which he fancies that he possesses.

We shall consider; First—The sinfulness of pride; and the danger to which it leads:

And; Secondly—Some of the most efficacious remedies, for so great an evil.

First. Pride appears to have been the most prominent, and leading sin of the fallen angels. When, with respect to a person qualified for being in the First office in the Christian ministry, we read, that he must be, "not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil;" the inference is plain, that it was indeed pride, in which the disobedience of Satan, and of the other fallen angels originated; and by which they endeavor to corrupt the principles and practices; and to destroy the happiness, of men.

Pride, is extremely odious in the sight of God: For He says; "Pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate." And again; that, "every one that is proud in heart, is an abomination to the Lord."

By other sins, men cause God to forsake them: But by pride, they cause Him to turn against them; to resist them; to act in direct opposition to their desires, and their wishes; their ways, and proceedings. Hence, we read, that, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

Pride, is productive of other sins. It is an impure fountain, sending forth its corrupt, its contaminated, its deleterious, and deadly streams. Many of the crimes which are prevalent in the world, and by which mankind are overwhelmed with miseries and afflictions, are its offspring.

It produces covetousness: For we learn from the Scripture, that he who is covetous, is a proud man: That he "enlargeth his desire as hell:" That he "cannot be satisfied."

From it proceeds persecution: For we read, that "the wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor:" "And blesseth the covetous whom the Lord abhorreth."

It is fruitful in impiety, and irreligion. Hence, the declaration of a Prophet, that, "the wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God."

It occasions strifes and many quarrels. For, that contention comes from pride, is a truth, which Solomon has recorded.

People are too apt to esteem themselves better than their neighbors; and to desire to be so esteemed by others; even by those that they despise. They therefore endeavor

to exalt themselves by making a display of their riches, their equipage, their talents, and the very virtues that they possess. To attach to themselves consequence, they often treat many around them with neglect and contempt; and affect over them a superiority. For the same purpose, they spread evil surmises; make false insinuations; foment jealousies; circulate slanderous reports; in short, they have recourse to every evil artifice, to exalt themselves, and depress others, in the estimation of the multitude: And what is worse; they often, by precept, and continually by example, teach these artifices to their children. But their attempts; their artifices; whether successful, or unsuccessful, are an abomination to the righteous Lord.

Pride, is productive of disobedience to civil government, and civil law; and of attempts, and acts which are murderous. It was pride which stimulated Absalom to disobey the law of his country; and to seek the life, and the kingly authority of his father David: Which prompted Athaliah to slay "the Royal seed;" excited Haman to meditate the death of all the Jews; caused

Herod to seek the life of the Saviour, by killing the Jewish children; and influenced Pharisees, and others, to put him to a shameful death.

We might enter upon a long catalogue of crimes and of sins, which pride occasions. We might specify as flowing from it, envy, hatred, and malice; falsehood, slander, and deceit; duplicity, fraud, and circumvention; ill-treatment, cruelty, and profanity; luxury, extravagance, despotism, and oppression: In a word, almost every vice; and every kind of wickedness. But we have already sufficiently exhibited its odious, its malignant, and polluted nature.

It is surely, a destructive sin. It is the presage of ruin, to those who indulge it. That it goes before destruction; and that it produces shame; are facts recorded in Holy Writ.

For instance; the inhabitants of Sodom were punished, signally, and dreadfully, for their pride. It was pride which occasioned Pharaoh and his people to perish in the Red sea; which brought the envious and wicked Haman to the gallows; which degraded the king of Babylon, and placed him

in the company of beasts; which brought a visible and signal curse upon the cruel and wretched Herod Agrippa: In short, God says; that "a man's pride shall bring him low;" and that "the proud shall be abased:" And what He says, will ever continue to be verified.

Such is the nature of pride; and such are its evil consequences. Then should we and others be admonished to avoid it: To be divested of so great an evil. If we continue in it; it will be our ruin. "Those that walk in pride," God, "is able to abase:" And He will abase them. He will condemn and punish them.

We are now, *Secondly*—To consider; some of the proper; the most important; and the most efficacious remedies for pride.

One suitable and proper remedy, is a knowledge, or a humble sense of our own sinfulness: And of God's Holiness: And of our own diminutiveness, and meanness: And of His majesty, excellence, and greatness: So that by instituting a comparison between Him and ourselves, we may sink comparatively, into nothing, in our own esteem.

If men would thus compare themselves with the Great God; their imaginary power, authority, and knowledge: Their fancied wisdom, excellence and greatness; their assumptions of honor and applause; of consequence, and superiority, would be dissipated; and they would see themselves as they are, insignificant and sinful beings, in their state of nature: And destitute of any worth, or excellence; except by Divine Grace, which is, indeed able, if they accept it, and improve it, to make them good; and truly great.

To the end, that they may have a knowledge of themselves; that they may see themselves in the true light; they should study the Holy Scripture, which is Divinely given for their instruction. They should "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" it. They should also observe the Sacraments, and other ordinances, which are appointed for the Church; and which are calculated to improve, to advance them, in the knowledge, and the practice of the true religion: And to make them acquainted with the character, of themselves; and of their Creator.

They should seek the aid of pious persons. They should pray to be imbued from on High, with knowledge, piety and wisdom: And they should importune God, that the knowledge, which they obtain from Him, may, by His blessing, be sanctified to their Spiritual and Eternal welfare: To the purposes, for which it is bestowed.

Knowledge, without such blessing, puffeth up: But with that blessing produces, invariably, humility; which is another indispensable, and necessary remedy for pride.

"Be clothed with humility;" is a Divine admonition. In the Gospel, humility, is represented, as being pre-eminently excellent, among Christian graces. It is equivalent to poorness of Spirit; and the Saviour says; "blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

He also declared the humble Christian to be the most excellent: For he called to him a child, and said to his Disciples, "whosover shall humble himself, as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven."

The most precious promises, are made to the humble: "For thus saith the High and

Lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity; whose name is Holy; I dwell in the most Holy place; with him also, that is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble; and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Again, we read; "whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased: And he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted."

Humility is opposite to pride. Then let us be possessed of so excellent a quality, that our pride may be thereby eradicated. Let us consider well the examples of humility set before us in the Scripture, and let us follow those examples. Patriarchs, and Prophets; Evangelists, and Apostles; and all Holy men, have been humble. Nay; the Holy Angels, fall down before the throne of God, in the lowliest, and humblest adoration. And above all; Christ has left us, in his own person, an example of humility: And we are to learn of him. He says to us; "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls."

Another great remedy for pride, is the consideration, that all our faculties of body

and of soul; all our natural, and acquired abilities; in a word, all that we are, and all that we possess, are the gifts of God; are talents, which He has entrusted to our management and care; and of which He requires us to make due improvement. For such improvement, we are responsible. Then should we be faithful to our trust; that when He shall call us to account, we may be ready to render the account to His acceptance.

He says to us; "What hast thou, that thou didst not receive?" As we have received of Him, all that we possess; when He shall require of us the same with usury; with improvement; let us be ready to meet His requirement.

Yet another remedy for pride, is the serious reflection, that death, will soon deprive us of all our Earthly possessions; of all our real, and imaginary excellencies; and leave us nothing of which we can be proud.

Is there a place for pride, in the grave, where our mouldering bodies will be laid? Will there be a place for pride before God,

when our disembodied souls, shall appear in His presence?

Since all Earthly things are short-lived and perishing; since we are so soon to leave them, let us seek through religion, a title to Heaven; that when we shall fail on the earth, we may be received into Everlasting habitations, of happiness and glory above.

The last remedy, that we shall now mention for pride, is perseverance, and improvement in Religion. To this end, let those who have been humbled under a sense of their sinfulness, and who are religiously walking in humility, before God, persevere in their Christian course. Let them aim at higher attainments in humility, and every Christian grace. Let them live in the constant exercise of what God has bestowed; and then will He bestow more abundantly.

The Lord gives grace to the humble: And in due time He will exalt them to His Everlasting kingdom. Then should we obey the inspired admonition; "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."

Finally: As we value our peace; our welfare, and happiness; here, and hereafter; let us walk, not in pride, but in humility; and may we be saved, in a world without end. Amen.

SERMON IX.

SONS OF GOD, IN A SPIRITUAL SENSE.

Romans viii. 14.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

In a sense which may be termed natural, all mankind are the children of God; inasmuch as He is the Maker, and Sustainer; and therefore, the common Father of them all.

In a sense which may be termed spiritual, there are, comparatively but few, who are His children: And they are such as are led, as others are not led, by His Spirit. They constitute His Spiritual family into which they are received, by adoption; whilst into this family, others are not so received. Hence they are His offspring both by natural and spiritual descent; whilst others

are His offspring by that descent only which is natural.

Had men never sinned, either in their own persons, or the persons of any of their ancestors, they would be spiritually, as well as naturally descended from God. But inasmuch as they have sinned, they are not to be considered as His Spiritual descendants, until they have been "born again," by being led, or duly influenced by His Spirit, after their natural birth. We are, then to consider, that they only, who are thus "born again;" who are thus led or influenced, are His adopted or spiritual children.

All men, are by nature, sinful. Their practice resulting from their nature, as an effect from its cause, is sinful also. Whilst their nature continues to be unchanged by the Spirit, they are therefore, naturally and practically averse to God; to His government and Law. They are alienated from Him, in their disposition and their conduct. Thus their feelings and their thoughts, and their actions, are not in conformity, but in opposition to His will. In short; they are not His friends; but His

enemies. Consequently, they are exposed to the punishment, which according to His justice must be inflicted, necessarily, upon those who continue to be His adversaries.

Hence, they are "children of disobedience," because they disobey Him: "Of wrath;" because they are obnoxious to the effects of His displeasure: "Of Satan;" because they are subservient to that Deceiver; that enemy of goodness; that destroyer of happiness. Consequently their situation in a state of nature, is to be deplored.

But God, by the gift of His Spirit, enables them, one and all; to escape from this deplorable situation: To become good, in their nature, and their practice: To reject Satan's service; and to withstand the temptations of that adversary: To avoid the punishment which is due for sin; and to attain to happiness, in the future world.

The gift, or bestowal of God's Spirit, is His Grace, or assistance, which He gives very freely and mercifully, to every individual, through the merits of His Eternal Son, Jesus Christ: In other words; through

the efficacy of Christ's death and suffering, resurrection, and intercession.

But, before it will be effectual for delivering from a state of nature, and from punishment; and for conferring happiness, it must be accepted. There must be submission to its influence. They only who accept it; who receive it and obey its motions, through repentance, and other Christian graces, are "born of the Spirit;"—are duly influenced, or led by it;—are Spiritually renewed, converted, regenerated, renovated, changed;—are brought by it, from "nature's darkness, into the marvellous light of God;"—are introduced by it, into God's spiritual family, the Church; are made by it, His spiritual and adopted children; His chosen people; His faithful servants; His peculiar friends;—are saved by it, from sin, and from Satan, and from future woe; and are blessed by it with Eternal blessings.

Men are introduced into the Christian Church by Baptism; and if they worthily receive it, in obedience to the motions of the Spirit, it is a means, whereby they receive a greater portion of the Spirit, than

they would otherwise receive; and is therefore, "a new birth," by the Spirit, as well as by water. But if they receive it unworthily, without regard to the Spirit's influence, they are, outwardly, by water; but not inwardly by the Spirit, "born again;" and in an outward, but not in a Spiritual manner, are members of the Church, the mystical body of Christ.

God bestows His Spirit upon the human race, because He loves them; pities them, and has mercy on them. He bestows it more abundantly, however, upon those who submit to it; who yield to its influence, its operation on their minds, their consciences, and hearts. He indeed causes it, to teach, and lead effectually, and in a saving manner, those who thus submit to its strivings, within their souls: Who without "quenching" it; without resistance to its admonitions, yield it their obedience.

They on whom He thus bestows it, and who thus receive it are thankful to Him, for His love, His pity and His mercy. In the language of the apostle John, they can exult and say; "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us,

that we should be called the sons of God." In the language of the Psalmist, they can say; "the Lord pitieth them that fear Him;"—"bless the Lord, O my soul,"—"who forgiveth all thine iniquities,"—"who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies." They can say in the words of the apostle to the Romans; "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God; and joint heirs with Christ." They may indeed consider themselves as being heirs to the Heavenly Inheritance, if they continue to be submissive and obedient to the Spirit.

They remember the words of the apostle Paul; "Know ye not,"—"that his servants ye are,"—"to whom ye yield yourselves servants?" And they refuse to be servants unto Satan: They yield themselves servants to the living God, by receiving and obeying His good Spirit, which He sends, to teach, to guide, to govern and to sanctify them. They endeavor to heed the admonition; "be ye followers of God, as dear children."

They who are truly His followers; who are devotedly obedient to His spirit, resemble Him. They imitate Him by being good. They hearken to His command, "be ye holy, for I am Holy." He first loved them, and they reciprocate His love. They have for Him a filial affection. They fear Him; not with a servile; but a filial fear. They worship Him according to His express direction; "in spirit and in truth." Their desire is to His name: They delight in His Law.

They give evidence of their fidelity and love towards Him; by their love to their fellow men. For they know; and He has instructed them to this effect, that except they love their brethren, it is impossible for them to love, reverence and fear Him, properly, and rightly, and to His acceptance.

They are engaged in the performance of their duty, in all its parts. They are prompted and enabled to discharge this duty, by the power and assistance of His Spirit, which dwells within them. This indwelling of the Spirit, is expressly asserted by the Scripture. Says the apostle

John; "God dwelleth in us." And he further says; "Hereby know we, that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit."

As it is by the aid of the Spirit, and in no other way, that they are able to perform any duty; it is to this Spirit, that they are indebted for their ability to repent of sin; to receive in a proper manner the Sacraments of the Church; to have Christian faith; and the hope of Heaven, according to the requirements of the Gospel; and to conform themselves to that holy and spiritual life, which is necessary for salvation.

Says an apostle; "if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live." — This language evidently teaches that the Spirit is bestowed upon men; that by its help, they are able to avoid sin, and to live righteously; that hereafter Eternal life, or Eternal death will be their portion, as they shall have lived righteously or unrighteously, in the present world.

They should submit to be taught by the Spirit: For, it conveys to them that Spirit-

ual knowledge which they need; a knowledge of the will of God; of His existence, and the Infinite perfections of His nature; of His Providence, government and law; of human duty, and the plan of salvation; of happiness and misery in a future state: In a word, of those things, which pertain to their present and their future welfare; and which, it is, therefore, expedient and necessary that they should know.

Christ said to his disciples, concerning this Spirit; "He shall teach you all things." The meaning of Christ, doubtless, was, that his Personal disciples, and other Christians, to the end of time, should be instructed by the Spirit, in those Divine things, with which it was requisite and necessary, that they should be acquainted.

The Spirit is therefore the Great Instructor in Divine truth; and "the Spirit of truth," is one of His Divine appellations. His teaching, His guidance and direction, are needful to sinful mortals, to direct them in the path of duty; and when they have strayed from that path, to bring thither again their erring footsteps.

They who trust to guides not endued

with the Spirit, will be led into error; into darkness; into ruin. Neither their own understanding, nor that of others independently of the Spirit of the Lord, is sufficient to keep them in the path of truth, and of duty. Hence the command; "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: Fear the Lord, and depart from evil."

They who adhere to the Spirit as their counselor, live to much better purpose than others live: For they have understanding: They are righteous: They therefore live in the discharge of duty; and their happiness is thereby promoted. They are indeed more excellent in their understanding, their character and life, than they who resist the Spirit, neglect their duty; and by these means, continue in the path of ruin. He who takes the Spirit for his guide, is truly righteous; and we read, that "the righteous is more excellent than his neighbor."

The righteous, who follow the instructions of the Holy Spirit, walk in the path of

safety, considering themselves not only as addressed by the interrogation, "who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" But as receiving the promise; "thou shalt walk in the way of safety, and thy foot shall not stumble."

Their minds are not distracted by false fears of danger: For their "refuge is in God:" And they feel protected from those spiritual evils which destroy the soul. They feel within themselves the truth of what is written; that, "there is"—"no condemnation to them"—"who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

They walk in the way of wisdom; and therefore, more pleasantly than others: For they experience that "its ways, are ways of pleasantness;" and that "all its paths are peace." They belong to "the kingdom of God;" and they find it as we read, to be "righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." They rejoice that they are able to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, which are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith."

They should persevere in their course. They should be careful, prayerful, and

watchful, lest they be diverted from that course. They should be on their guard, lest they be led astray by temptation: Lest they be tempted to be led by the riches, the honors, the vanities, the lusts, and the pleasures of the world.

Very many are living in a tempted and vicious manner; being as an apostle describes them, "foolish, disobedient, deceived;" also, "serving divers lusts and pleasures; living in malice, and envy, hateful, and hating one another." Saint Jude declares them to be "mockers," and says of them, "these be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." They will have a fearful account to render. It is said to every one of them: "God shall bring thee unto judgment."

Great care should be taken not to be led by principles and examples which are evil. The command, "be not conformed to this world," should be duly and carefully observed. There should be no desire to follow the multitude, in the pursuit of evil.

Care and caution, and a discriminating judgment should be used, to detect false spirits, and not to be led by them into vice,

and immorality; schism, and fanaticism; heresy, and bigotry; sin, iniquity, and irreligion. Says the apostle John; "believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they are of God." And he further says; "we are of God; he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us:" And his meaning evidently is, that the apostles, and other true ministers of Christ, have the spirit and the doctrine of God; speak and teach by that spirit; and that they who disregard such spirit, and such doctrine, are not God's spiritual children.

There is a spirit of pride — a spirit of oppression — a spirit of ambition — a spirit of fanaticism — a spirit of licentiousness — a spirit of hypocrisy — a spirit of schism — a spirit of persecution — a spirit of revenge — a spirit of anarchy and disorder — a spirit of ignorance and delusion — a spirit which aspires after riches, after honor, after power — a spirit of self righteousness, and self will; — and many other Spirits, which are false; and which should by no means be followed.

We, my Brethren, should follow, faithfully, *fearlessly*, and soberly, the Spirit of

God. For, as the apostle to Timothy declares; "He hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

The Spirit of God, should rule and reign in us; that we may be His servants: His spiritual children. It is the Spirit of the Father. It is the Spirit of the Eternal Son. It is the Holy Ghost. It is God Himself.

It is that Spirit by which the material, and spiritual creation has existence; by which mankind have been redeemed through the death of Christ; and by which they are privileged to be delivered from the dominion of sin, and Eternal death; and to attain to righteousness, and Eternal life, on condition that they conform their hearts, and their lives, to what the same Spirit teaches.

It is the Spirit by which the Church, has heretofore been, as it is now, and as it ever will be, preserved.

By its power and assistance, they who are spiritually "dead in trespasses and sin," may, if they follow, as it enables them to follow, its teaching, be resuscitated into new and spiritual life; and attain to a happy immortality.

Have we within ourselves evidence, that we are brought into "newness of life," by submitting to its motions; its operations, in our hearts?

If we have the evidence in question; if "the Spirit itself bears witness, with our spirits," that such is our condition, and that we by adoption, are really and truly members of the spiritual family of God, let us never follow, however much we may have followed in time past, the opinions, the fancies, and the fashions of a wicked world: Nor the desires of our own corrupt nature: But let us adhere steadfastly, and perseveringly, to the teaching of the Spirit; the Spirit of Eternal truth; the Spirit of God that is within us: So shall we be comforted in this world; and be blessed with Eternal blessings, in the world to come.

It is our duty to admonish those who have not yet submitted to be led by the Spirit, to submit, without hesitance or delay.

Death is near at hand. The life, that they now enjoy, will soon, perhaps suddenly, be terminated. Of what avail to them then, will be the honors, the distinctions, the riches, the possessions, and the pleasures

of this world? But the Spirit, if they possess it; and its fruits, if they bring forth these fruits; will be to them of Infinite, and Eternal value.

May we, my hearers, one and all of us, be so directed by the Holy Spirit, in this life, that in the world to come, we may have life Everlasting. Amen.

SERMON X.

INDUSTRY.

Proverbs vi. 6.

"GO TO THE ANT, THOU SLUGGARD; CONSIDER HER WAYS, AND BE WISE."

MEN'S apostacy from God, has so corrupted and deranged their inclinations, and their knowledge; their principles and practices, as to render them deficient in all the branches of their duty.

Hence, God, amongst other means which He uses to reclaim them, often sends them to inferior animals; even to the smallest insects, to be instructed in their duty; and to be persuaded to its performance.

Thus the ox, by shewing that he knew "his owner," taught by his example, the Israelites, that they ought to acknowledge God, as the owner and Supreme Proprietor

of themselves, and of all that they possessed.

Also the ass, in shewing that he knew "his master's crib," taught that People, by his example, not only the same great truth; but that they ought to be filled with gratitude to God, for being the author of all the blessings that they enjoyed.

Likewise, the fowls of the air, as the Saviour shews; since without anxiety or foresight, they trust for their food to the Providence of God; teach, and persuade by example, all men; so far as men are willing to learn and be persuaded, not to be over anxious; not to be too excessive in their desires or their labors, for wealth, and for Earthly possessions; or even for necessary food and raiment: but after they have used proper industry, and due exertion to obtain temporal comforts and conveniences, to trust to Him who created them, for what is needful, or proper to possess.

The Scripture records many cases, in which mankind, in various departments of their duty, should receive instruction from some animal inferior to themselves.

We shall refer, however, to but one case more, and that is mentioned in the text, where the sluggard is directed to learn wisdom from the way, or example, of the ant.

As men should not be excessively anxious or laborious, in pursuit of convenient and necessary things of an Earthly nature; so, on the other hand; they should not be sluggish; stupidly inactive, in relation to these things.

Wisdom, is that faculty of the mind, which directs them to use proper means, for the accomplishment of proper, and of worthy objects.

To obtain in a lawful manner, and by honest industry, necessary food and raiment; and a suitable supply of other temporal comforts, is an object manifestly worthy, laudable and proper; and he who has health and strength, and reason and understanding, and refuses to employ these faculties, for the attainment of that object, is evidently wanting in wisdom.

The text sends such a person, for instruction; for learning wisdom, to the diminutive, though industrious and careful *ant.*

God is indeed, the author, the giver of things temporal: Of Earthly enjoyments. But He gives these things on condition, that to obtain them, men labor, industriously, and wisely.

It is plainly a duty of men, to be thus instrumental in providing; in obtaining, from Him, what is necessary, useful, and convenient, for themselves, and those dependent on them.

When engaged in the laudable and honest avocations of life, they are farther from the reach of dangerous temptations. They are enabling themselves, and those whom they ought to support to be supplied with what is needful for the body; to be not a burden to society; to afford something, at least, for Religious, and charitable purposes; and to be, in a better situation for improvement in Religious knowledge.

The indolent and slothful, for the most part, not only neglect to be instrumental in doing good, in this manner, but are apt to corrupt themselves and others, with intemperance, and licentiousness; with vanity, and wanton language; with vain unprofitable amusements; and, with a

reckless disregard for morality and religion: In a word; with many vicious practices and habits. For idleness and sloth are the parents of many vices.

Slothfulness, is often produced by parental indulgence. But he whose youth has been nursed in idleness, often experiences; and spreads around him, many evils, that early industry would have easily prevented.

But the sluggard should learn wisdom, from the provident and active ant;—wisdom which teaches to be industrious; and to provide, as God gives ability and knowledge for providing, things which are requisite for sustenance and comfort.

An immoderate desire for wealth, is censurable and wrong. But a desire honestly to avoid poverty, must be right and proper. The pious Agur prayed, that he might have neither "poverty" nor "riches."

Secondly. It is in reference, not only to temporal concerns; to the common affairs of life;—but also to spiritual things; to religion, and future happiness, that many are accounted sluggards: And, that the text admonishes the sluggard, to "go to the ant;" to "consider her ways;" and to learn from her, wisdom.

In this point of view; all men; of all classes, and of all ranks, without exception, that are not possessed of the true religion; not laboring to be endowed, more and more, with those spiritual Graces, of which Religion is constituted; not working "out their salvation, with fear and trembling;" not putting forth their exertions to be happy in the world to come; are truly sluggards;—and are to be considered as being such according to the meaning of the text;—according to the meaning of its inspired author;—according to the meaning of God Himself, by whom that author was inspired.

Thus, the laborious mechanic; the active merchant; the persevering student; the busy statesman; are all; not in a temporal, but a spiritual sense, sluggards; except they are actively engaged in religion, which is the service of God; and which, not only redounds to His honor, but procures for its possessors, salvation and happiness; and all the enjoyments of heaven.

They who are really and truly engaged in religion, the service of Almighty God, possess it in themselves; profess it before *the* world; manifest it by their speech, and

their conduct; and are endeavoring to improve, to increase it, in their hearts and their lives.

They also endeavor to promote and extend it among their fellow men, by devoting a part of their time, their talents, and their substance, for its promotion and extension, that others may be partakers of its blessings.

They are indeed conscious that they are not perfect; and they lament their own frailties, inadvertencies and imperfections. Nevertheless, they know experimentally, that they have faith, and repentance, and true holiness, in which religion essentially consists.

In view of their imperfection, they exclaim in the language of the Psalmist; "turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way." And because they know that they are possessed of genuine religion, and are therefore heirs of the Heavenly Inheritance, they say, in the language of an apostle; "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God; and joint heirs with Christ."

That men may be the more active and industrious, in embracing religion, and in making improvement in it; they may take a lesson of industry from the ant.

The ant instructs, however, not by speech, but by action: And men should consider her way, not merely to increase their knowledge in Natural history; but to be wise and good; and to grow wiser and better continually.

The ant teaches foresight; by making provision for the time to come: For, in the context we read concerning her; that "she provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." Thus, is she prudently prepared with sustenance for winter.

As the ant, in the summer, the season adapted to her labor, provides for herself a subsistence for the winter, the season in which she is unable to work and gather food; so should men, in the time of their present life; the time of their probation; the time especially assigned them, for the purpose; work out their salvation, by em- [illegible] religion, and by improving and per- [illegible]it in their hearts and their lives, and

thus make suitable provision for themselves in another World, where they will never be able to make such provision, if they there appear without it, through sinfulness, and criminal neglect.

They should also make this provision, in their youthful years. For they know not how soon, or suddenly they may die; and though they may live long, they will be less able to make it, in the winter of old age.

How, except with horror, can the aged sinner, when forced by disease, and the approach of death, to know, that the termination of his Earthly course is nigh at hand; look back upon his life, which has been spent in idleness and sin? And how will that horror be increased, when the final sentence of his destiny shall be uttered by the Judge of Quick and Dead?

The ant teaches by activity and diligence. She never relaxes her exertions. She never remits her work, while the season of labor lasts.

By her industrious example, men should be influenced, prompted, to persevere, with unceasing, with untiring efforts, to work out their salvation; to lay up treasures in

Heaven; to secure to themselves spiritual riches; to be perfected in Christian graces; to be adorned with the same; to be prepared to die; to make spiritual provision for themselves, beyond the grave, and in another world.

The ant teaches by her prudence. She works in due time, and at the proper season. If summer and harvest were neglected by her, she would be wholly destitute in winter. She embraces the favorable opportunity; never forgets her labor; never feigns sickness, or frames an excuse for remitting or delaying it: And though she has no one to appoint her task; no one to instruct, to arouse, or to prompt her; to call her to account, or to punish her; Yet, she works to advantage, and with the utmost success.

O, that men would be as active, and diligent; as faithful, and as prudent; as willing and persevering, in the work of their salvation, as the ant, in laying up her stores for time.

The sluggard abuses his mental powers. For these teach him, that he is a sinner: That if he continue so, without repentance and reformation, he will be punished. On

the other hand, that if he repent, and reform; he will be forgiven, and be blessed.

The feelings of his nature, inasmuch as they teach him the same things, are likewise abused by him.

Why, then, will he not arouse from his spiritual lethargy; be divested of his slothfulness; become wise; and embrace religion; and thus have respect for his own feelings, and the faculties of his soul, and do them justice?

These faculties and feelings, are indeed sinful, and often lead him astray. Yet, at times; through the influence of Divine Grace, which is given to every man; they warn and instruct him to repent, and work out his salvation.

The sluggard also abuses; he sins against; God. For, though God is the author and giver of all temporal, and spiritual blessings, yet He requires men to labor for these blessings, carefully, and faithfully.

Since God is the author, the preserver, the redeemer, and benefactor of men: Since He bestows upon them innumerable blessings; and since all that He has done for them, has been; as all that He is now

doing for them, is, with a willingness, a desire, a design, to do them good in this world; and to bless them with Eternal blessings, in the next; they should not be slothful and negligent with respect to their own interest.

He regards this interest; And through Christ, is giving them Grace to promote it, both now, in the time of this present life; and in future, beyond the existence of this world, when "time," to use the expression of another, "shall be merged, in the ocean of Eternity."

If they neglect this interest, by not repenting, and becoming Christians; they sin against Him. They abuse His Grace. They slight the Saviour, who bled and died, that the Grace in question, might be bestowed upon them, and that, by their due improvement of this Grace, they might be blessed with the fruition of endless enjoyment, in the Paradise above.

Yes: God bestows His Grace, not that men may be idle and slothful, continuing in their sins; but that they may be industri- [illegible]ing it in such a manner, as to become [illegible] from sin: Purified to Himself; "a [illegible]r people, zealous of good works."

And thus be fitted and prepared, for the honor, the glory, the happiness, for which He created, and for which He has redeemed them.

He made them holy. They have made themselves sinful. He now gives them Grace through Christ, to be again holy; if not fully, in the present world, yet sufficiently, to enable them to be saved, and to be completely holy, and completely happy, in a future state of being.

Then let us, my hearers, improve this Grace. Let us not be "slothful in business." But let us "be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

Let us, whilst here, endeavor to do our duty. Let us endeavor to be Christians; and to walk worthy of the Christian vocation. Let us "fear God and keep His commandments." Let us endeavor to have "a conscience void of offense towards God and towards men." Let us live, as we shall wish, when we come to die, that we had lived: And may God, in His mercy, through Christ, save us, in the future, with an Everlasting salvation, and bless us, with Heavenly, and Eternal blessings. Amen.

SERMON XI.

THE NECESSITY OF BEING INFLUENCED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Romans viii. 13.

"IF YE LIVE AFTER THE FLESH, YE SHALL DIE: BUT IF YE THROUGH THE SPIRIT DO MORTIFY THE DEEDS OF THE BODY, YE SHALL LIVE."

IN this passage of Scripture, the apostle represents one class of persons, as living after the flesh. By these, he means the vicious and the wicked; such as are governed by worldly interests, and sinful passions. The death, with which he threatens them, is punishment in future.

He represents another class of persons, as mortifying by the help of God's Spirit, the deeds of the body. By these, he means, the virtuous and good; such as are influenced by ingenuous motives, and holy

feelings. The life which he promises them, is happiness hereafter.

Being Divinely authorized to give spiritual instruction to men; his words are true: And whatever he threatens or promises will be realized. Hence, we learn from the text; That the misery of the wicked is certain.—That the happiness of the righteous is sure.

Lamentable, indeed, is the reflection, that multitudes live and die, spiritually blind to what follows after death; especially, to the punishment, which awaits the impenitent.

Were their blindness without any agency of their own; it might be pardoned. But since it proceeds from their wicked passions, which they voluntarily permit to overwhelm them with spiritual darkness, its pardon is more difficult.

It is the blindness in question, which causes men to be attached to the vanities of the world; and to be so insensible to religion. For, except they were sinfully blinded, they would never seek for happiness in Earthly things, from which, no true and permanent happiness can be found. They would seek it in religion, which affords it; and which is the only source, from which *it can be derived.*

Being blinded by corrupt passions, they are, consequently swayed by those passions. Hence, they too often reject religion, and embrace other objects; delighting in the pleasures, the riches, and the honors of the world. These things increase their spiritual blindness, and corruption, and thereby render them more insensible to their danger of being made miserable.

How necessary then it is, that they duly meditate on the subject before us; that they may have a realizing sense of their danger; and thus be incited to avoid it, by correcting the sinfulness of their passions, in which their blindness and danger originate; and through which the same blindness and danger are augmented, by Earthly temptations and vanities.

Men are taught by their reason, to know the difference between goodness, and sinfulness; and, therefore to know, that they are subject to a Divine Law, which requires them to practice what is good; and to refrain from what is sinful.

The existence of this law, proves, incontestably that there is a Supreme Judge, to whom, all must render an account; and [illegible] will acquit or condemn them, according [illegible]eir conduct, in relation to that Law.

As all are to be judged; it inevitably follows; not only that they who are obedient to the law, will be rewarded; but that transgressors will be punished.

The dispensation of misery in future, is proved, not only by the reason of men; but also by the feelings of their nature. For, they are naturally impressed with a fear of punishment, resulting from their consciousness, of sin and of guilt.

For what purpose is it, that their reason, and the feelings of their nature, conspire to teach them, that for their misconduct in this world, misery awaits them in the next, unless there is a reality in that misery?

Surely, this natural fear of misery, and the idea which reason affords of it, may be considered as Divine premonitions of its existence; and as warnings which God has given to men to avoid it, by living, as they ought to live, in conformity to His Law.

They, therefore, who refuse to acknowledge it, are guilty, not only of abusing their reason, with which God has endowed them, that they may exercise it, for the discovery of truth; but also of doing violence to their natural impressions: Impres-

sions, with which God has caused their nature to be fraught, that they may be influenced to the performance of their duty, and be happy.

They entertain opinions contrary to mankind in general. For all nations; both the civilized and Barbarous, have ever believed in God's retributive justice:—In the happiness of Heaven: And, the pains of Hell.

No People has ever existed as a tribe;—or as a nation; without a religion founded on the belief of rewards, and of punishment after death.

There has never been a people, or community of men, without civil laws, or municipal Rules of their own, to regulate their conduct towards one another. By adhering to such laws: By submitting to such rules; they have recognized the principle of right and wrong in their social intercourse.

Mankind have thus proved that they believe in the Divine law: And in God, as the Dispenser of Eternal justice, according to the tenor of that law.

The Heathen, indeed, have ever had exagant notions, in relation to the condi-

tion of men, in a future state. Nevertheless, they, as well as those instructed in Christianity, have always had a belief in the existence of such a state: And their belief in this respect, is manifest from their religion, their laws, their reason, and the impressions made upon their nature by the finger of God.

Thus it should seem, that they who live in Christian lands, but are unwilling to acknowledge the future retribution of the wicked, are more deficient in spiritual knowledge, than the generality, not only of Christians, but of Heathen.

Nor are they easily excused; since they are privileged with Divine revelation, which clearly establishes the doctrine of happiness and misery in a world to come. "These," says the Saviour, when speaking of the wicked; "shall go away, into Everlasting punishment:—But the righteous into life Eternal."

It is, at present unnecessary, to quote in proof of this doctrine, other passages from the Sacred Oracles; since every reader of the Scripture must know, that nothing is more fully and explicitly taught in the

Bible, than the doctrine under consideration.

Thus reason, and nature, and the Scriptures concur in declaring, that God exists: That He has prescribed a law, founded on the principles of Eternal justice: That according to that law, He will judge the whole world, rewarding Eternally the good; and punishing Eternally the bad.

Then let him who is wicked reflect, that he must die: That his death will be followed by the judgment: And that his punishment will be extreme and endless. Let him, as far as he is able; revolve in his mind, in all their solemn aspects, the untried scenes of Eternity; and especially the pain, that he is destined to experience.—In view of his situation, let him repent, and perform his duty; that he may be pardoned for his sin: That futurity may be divested of its horrors: And that he may be an heir not of misery, but of glory.

Sinners, for the most part, however, are unwilling to reflect on their spiritual prospects. Their condemnation, is disagreeable [illegible] thoughts: And they often strive, by [illegible] indulgences, to expel it from their

minds. By this means, they sink more deeply into spiritual ruin.

They frequently hope to be happy, because God is merciful. They ought, however, to be afraid, of being made miserable, because He is just.

They sometimes pretend that because Christ "is the propitiation"—"for the sins of the whole world;" all will be saved; themselves not excepted. Rather should they heed his declaration, when he says: "Except ye repent, ye shall perish."

They are prone to extenuate their sins; and by way of palliating their misconduct, to declare themselves to be as good as many professors of religion. But, however imperfect, some professors of Christianity may be; it is not through their imperfection, that non-professors;—that sinners of any description, can expect to be forgiven. None will be acquitted, or condemned in the judgment, for the goodness, or the sinfulness of others. Each individual "must stand, or fall, to his own master." And it becomes all to know, that they will never be approved by the Judge;—that they will never be made happy; except they

have holiness of heart, and of life, in their present probationary state.

Sinners, when admonished to their duty, often plead inability to perform it. But they ought to consider, that according to the Scriptures; God has given them "the administration of His Spirit." That "Christ" —"is the true light that lighteth"— "them." That through the merits of Christ's death, God gives them ability to be holy; and to perform their duty.—Thus, should they know, that their plea of inability is false. Hence, let God be obeyed, when he says to them: "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit,"—"and"—"cast away, all your transgressions."—It is because, they are able to do their duty, that they will be punished for neglecting it.

They often deceive themselves, by considering their punishment, as being very distant from the present time. They therefore delay to prepare for avoiding it; thinking, that if they shall see fit to make the necessary preparation, they can make it, at some future period of their life.

But they ought to remember, that life is [illegible]ain. That it may cease, before the

setting, or the rising of the sun. That its longest continuance is short. That when it ends, they can have no further privilege to prepare for Eternity. That to continue to sin, on the presumption, that life will continue, and afford further opportunity to repent, is therefore hazardous;—is impious. That it impairs their ability to reform; and evidently tends to their ruin.

Nor let it be thought that a preparation for Eternity is not proper for the young, as well as for the old. Death is constantly seizing on the young. It often seems to delight in making them its victims. Hence if they delay to make the preparation in question; there is danger, not only, that they will become hardened, and more disinclined to prepare, if they live: But also, that they may not have the privilege of living; nor, consequently, of preparing.

It appears, from our subject, that sinners, are deceived, ignorant, and blind, in relation to their spiritual concerns. Their deception; their ignorance, and blindness, however, proceed, not from any Divine ordination, or force; so much as from their own voluntary choice.

They are not so blind, and so ignorant, however, as not to know, that they do wrong. They know full well, that their disposition, and their conduct should be changed.

The avaricious, for instance, are aware of their sin, in loving the world. The ambitious, know, that their ambition is wrong. The hypocritical, are sensible that their deception is vile. The voluptuous, are conscious of the wickedness of their excesses. In short, all sinners, know the sinfulness of their nature; and the impropriety, and wickedness of their conduct. But being persuaded by their corrupt passions, to act contrary to their knowledge, they continue to sin; and often at the expense of their salvation, and their happiness.

How necessary then, it is that they purify their passions, and their hearts: That they become spiritually regenerated: That they perform their duty; taking hold on the promises of the Gospel, and laying up for themselves, in Heaven, treasures, which are spiritual, and enduring.

B[illegible] although, many are regardless of th[illegible]tual interests; yet it is cheering

to reflect, that many others, are concerned for their own souls; and are seeking for an interest in Heaven;—for happiness in future.

That the righteous, will attain to this happiness, is evident, from reason, and the light of nature; and from Scripture: All which, unitedly proclaim it, as the result of obedience to the Divine law of God.

The righteous perform the works of righteousness. These, are internal works of the heart; and external works, of the outward behavior;—or of conduct: And as enumerated by the Scriptures; are faith, and repentance, and prayer; meekness, and temperance, and gentleness; and others; all which, are summarily comprehended, in love to God, and love to man.

These works are proofs, that they who perform them, are furnished with the Spirit, mentioned in the text: That through this Spirit, they "mortify the deeds of the body:" That they are obedient to the Divine Law: That they reverence and obey God, who is the giver of that law; and who is the Supreme Judge of all.—That in the final judgment, they will meet with His

approbation: That in Eternity, they will live in the fruition of His presence;—in the enjoyment of life Everlasting;—in the glory, the honor, and the happiness, which are Eternal.

The deeds of the body which they mortify, and which are of an internal, and external nature; are unbelief, impenitence, and injustice; sedition, heresy, and schism; and others specified by the apostle who terms them the works of the flesh; and declares, that they who live after them shall die: That is;—shall in future be made miserable.

Thus spiritual life; and spiritual death; in other words, happiness and misery hereafter, are placed before men; that they may choose, to which they will attain.

May our choice be directed by wisdom. May we, by mortifying the deeds of the body, evince to our consciences, to the world, and to God, that we prefer the former.

In the case under consideration, no compulsory process, is Divinely used, to bring mankind to a wise, and proper choice; and to cause them to become the recipients of

future felicity. Nor, are they, by any Divine decree, prevented from choosing as they ought; and consequently, from the happiness of Heaven.

God never forces upon them His blessings: Nor withholds those blessings from them when they conduct obediently to His Law.

As voluntary agents, they choose for themselves. They conduct according to their own free will: And their destiny is determined accordingly.

They, who, through the Spirit, "mortify the deeds of the body," have often less of this world's goods, than many others, "who live after the flesh;" For; they are less desirous of temporal, than of spiritual riches.

Hence, God without doubt, frequently withholds from them the honors, the wealth, and the pleasures of this world: lest these things, be detrimental to their spiritual interests. But he will bestow upon them what is Infinitely more precious; a Heavenly Inheritance, in the world to come.

They are often afflicted. But their affliction, as an apostle declares; if they bear it as they ought; will work out for them, an *exceeding; an* Eternal weight of glory.

Hence, they look forward, with patience; with hope; with assurance; to the day of final retribution, when all things will be properly adjusted: When they will see; and realize, more perfectly, the promise, that they who mortify the deeds of the body shall live.—Live in the fruition of immortality und blessedness: In the mansions of the Heavenly Paradise: In the presence of God: In the company of Angels, and of saints: And in all the enjoyments, that Heaven affords.

Thus will they "shine forth, as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." Amen.

SERMON XII.

THE NECESSITY OF SEEKING AND OF SERVING GOD THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Hosea x. 12.

"SOW TO YOURSELVES IN RIGHTEOUSNESS; REAP IN MERCY; BREAK UP YOUR FALLOW GROUND: FOR, IT IS TIME TO SEEK THE LORD, TILL HE COME, AND RAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS UPON YOU."

THE meaning of the Scripture, seems, in many instances, to be obscured, by figurative expressions. But, when this meaning, is rightly, and properly explained, and understood, it presents to our view, the plainest truths, in a rich variety of forms; and tends to impress upon our minds, such truths, by an attractive influence.

God grant that our minds, may be refreshed, by Divine truth; whilst we endeavor to explain the text, by considering: First:—The duty, it prescribes: And;

Secondly:—The arguments, it uses, to enforce this duty.

First.—Its several and emphatic clauses, or expressions, signify collectively; that it is our duty, to "seek the Lord:" But separately considered, they specify both the manner, and the time, in which He should be sought by us.

In righteousness, should we therefore seek Him, according to the direction of the text, when it says to us;—"Sow to yourselves, in righteousness."

No one expects, that without sowing; without planting; a harvest, or an increase of grain, will be produced: And, how can a person expect a harvest, which is spiritual and Heavenly, and which consists in happiness without end, except he plant, or sow, in a Spiritual and religious manner, by possessing righteousness, and improving in the same?

In relation to spiritual things, the Scripture assures us, that in the day of judgment, we shall reap, according to what we now plant, in the present life.

Then let us not plant sinfully, but righteously. Let us not, by a life of sin,

provoke God. Let us "serve Him, with a perfect heart, and a willing mind;" and perform His will, uniformly, and without reserve.—In this manner, therefore, by sowing to ourselves, in righteousness, should we seek God; who is the Lord; the rightful Proprietor of all things.

Inasmuch as the Scripture informs us, that in like manner, as we plant, we shall reap; and, inasmuch as the text directs us to reap in mercy; it impliedly directs, that in mercy we should plant. In other words, that we should seek God, by living righteously; and, at the same time, depend; not, on any merit of our own; but, on His love, mercy and benevolence, for obtaining Heaven.

The enjoyment of Heaven, is His gift, which He will bestow upon those, and those only, who obey Him: Who live as He directs, or commands. They cannot indeed merit it, by living righteously, or by any obedience that they can render Him: And yet He will not bestow it on them, except they thus live; except they yield Him their obedience. The condition to be performed, in order to receive the gift, is, that they

obey Him. But the gift cannot, by the performance of the condition, be changed into debt. It is a gift still. It must be received, if received at all, not through God's indebtedness; but through His mercy to the good.

There are many, as we have reason to believe, who vainly hope that through His mercy, they shall find acceptance with Him, and obtain Heaven, though they seek Him not: Though they are not endeavoring to be righteous.

Without doubt, there are many others, who flatter themselves, in as vain a manner, that, by the performance of good works, they can so comply, with the conditions under consideration, as to make God indebted to them; Therefore, that He will bestow upon them Heaven as a reward, or a debt, which He owes them, for their own righteousness: For their own merit.

But they mistake. For it is through mere mercy, that they can find any favor, at His hands.—They must, indeed, "sow in righteousness;" as well, as in His mercy: But, in no other way, than in His mercy only, can they reap.

Then let us endeavor to accept Heaven as the gift of God, through Jesus Christ. We must be, at least, comparatively righteous, or He will not bestow it on us. But, by being so, we can never merit it. We can never receive it, except as a gift, which God by His Grace and mercy through Christ, will condescend to give us, if we obey Him.

We must further seek the Lord, as the text admonishes, when it says to us; "break up your fallow ground."

It would be, in vain to plant, or to sow grain, upon fallow, or uncultivated ground. That ground must be broken up, the weeds must be destroyed: And the seed grain must be buried in the Earth, before the harvest can be produced.

In like manner, the fallow ground of the soul, or its natural unwillingness to be righteous, must be broken up, by its repentance for its sins; by its belief in God in His promises, and Divine Law: By adherence, as far as it is able, to the precepts of that law: By its confidence and trust in God, as its Saviour: And, at the same time, by its expectation of obtaining Heaven, not

by its own merits; but by Divine Grace and mercy.

The necessity of continued diligence in being righteous; and of depending at the same time, upon mere mercy, for salvation and Eternal happiness, however much disputed and denied, by those who are unrenewed by the Spirit, is, nevertheless manifest, to the spiritually regenerate, who are endeavoring to be righteous, according to the precepts of. the Bible.

When, with spiritual power, the truth of God's word, is brought home to the conscience, the soul depends, for salvation, not on its own righteousness; but on God's mercy, exercised through the righteousness of Christ: And yet, it purifies itself; or God's mercy would never save it.

Thus, it appears, that the soul must be subdued, or broken up, by being freed from its transgressions, and its evil propensities; and by being righteous; and, finally, by depending upon God's Grace, in order to attain to salvation.

God saves by Grace. But the condition on which He saves, is, that men break up the fallow ground of their souls, their

minds, their consciences, and hearts; by eradicating their evil passions; and by living soberly, righteously, and Godly.

We should also, by being righteous, and religious, "seek the Lord," now, and continually, perseveringly, and zealously, until we die, when, if we have thus sought Him, "He" will "come, and rain righteousness upon" us; by giving our souls admission into Paradise, there to be blessed, during the interval between death and the resurrection from the Dead.

If we shall thus seek Him, He will, indeed, rain righteousness, upon us, by giving us, many spiritual comforts and enjoyments, amidst the vicissitudes, the trials and the troubles, of the present life.—And; if we shall thus seek Him; He will, after, we shall have risen from the dead, rain righteousness upon us, more abundantly, at the day of judgment; and subsequently, through Eternity, by making us recipients of endless, and of perfect blessedness, in another; —a future;—a better World.

Hence, it is now time, as the text admonishes, to seek the Lord: And all should seek Him, as the text directs, till He come, and *rain righteousness* upon them.

Thus, then, as we have said, and as the text and the whole tenor of the Scriptures exhort, we should now; and whilst we live; seek the Lord; by being in ourselves righteous; by trusting in His mercy; by breaking up the fallow ground of our hearts: In other words, by eradicating their sinfulness: And by persevering in these things, until He rain upon us righteousness, by making us to be inheritors; partakers, of present, and of future happiness.

Secondly. — There are many arguments, in favor of the duty of seeking God, by abstaining from all sin; by being righteous; and by trusting to His mercy for being blessed.

These arguments, however, may chiefly, if not wholly, be comprised, in the urgent necessity of discharging; and the certainty of success; in faithfully endeavoring to discharge, that important duty.

It is, indeed necessary and all important, not only that the duty under consideration, should be performed, but that it should be performed, immediately; without delay.

As the husbandman goes forth, at the [illegible] season, to till the ground, knowing,

that if the work be neglected, till the time of performing it be past, he will have reason, in the time of harvest, to repent of his negligence; so they who are remiss, negligent, and slothful, in seeking the Lord, and preparing for Heaven, until the time of seeking shall have ended; should know, and consider; that at last, they will bitterly lament their sin, and their spiritual indolence.

We read; that, "the wicked, shall be turned into hell:" And the Saviour says of them, that they shall go "into Everlasting punishment."

In many places of the Scriptures, the righteous, are represented, as recipients, as inheritors of Heaven. The Saviour, expressly declares, that "Eternal life," by which, he obviously means, happiness, which is Heavenly, and endless, shall be their portion.

Do we need any greater evidence, any stronger proof, of the necessity of being righteous;—of seeking God through virtue, righteousness, and religion? Of ceasing to be vicious, sinful, and iniquitous; and of being good and holy, in our desires, our

thoughts, and our nature? Our practices; our habits; and all our actions?

If then, there is necessity, as there manifestly is, that we should be righteous; it is plainly, and evidently necessary, that we should not defer, or postpone, the time of being so: For we have no certainty, that the time of our lives will be lengthened, or prolonged; from one year, or even from one hour to another. We are, every moment, liable to die: And after death, our present privilege of seeking God by a life of righteousness, will not, if we now neglect it, be continued. Surely, therefore, we should not procrastinate. We should not, under any circumstances, delay, in the work of seeking God, and preparing, for a world to come.

"Now, is the day of salvation." If we omit to improve it, another day, for aught we know, may be that of our condemnation, and consignment, to perdition and despair.

Are any of us young? The season of youth, before vicious habits have become fixed; and before the mind has been filled with worldly cares, is admirably well adapt-

ed to the purpose of becoming inured, to the duty, which God requires.

Are we in middle life? We have no time to lose. There may be, but a step, between us, and the grave; and we should improve our time.

As for the aged; their life must be drawing to a speedy close: Or if it be lengthened for a while; a want of mental energy, will, perhaps, be the means, of soon unfitting them, for those religious exercises, and spiritual exertions which are necessary, to work out their salvation.

Hence the aged, the middle aged, and the young, should be up, and doing, whilst they have opportunity; before any adverse circumstances, shall prevent them from a proper discharge of duty: Before death shall overtake them: In short; before their privilege of seeking God shall have ended.

If any now feel a disposition to seek, and to serve the Lord; then this, is peculiarly, the time, for them, to seek, and to serve Him. The desire which they feel, is an evidence, that He is working in them by His Spirit, to persuade them to their duty. If they quench; if they stifle the

motions of His Spirit, within them, the Grace which He is thus bestowing on them, may be so withdrawn, that they may never serve Him to His acceptance: Consequently; that they may never be saved.

By yielding to His Grace, the influence of His Spirit, and by being righteous through its help, they should co-operate with it. Thus the work of seeking Him, and of obtaining salvation should be accomplished.

Let us, my hearers; endeavor to submit to the motions, the strivings of the Spirit within us. Through its help, its influence, let us be renewed unto righteousness and holiness, and improve in the same: So shall we perform the work required of us, and secure to ourselves, a happy immortality.

Indeed, if we faithfully engage, and persevere in this work, we are sure, of successfully performing it.

The husbandman knows, that if his seed corn, be not watered, by rains which are seasonable, and suitable, his labor will be lost. But though he cannot command the showers, yet, if he be faithful, he performs his labor, in the hope, that God will send "the former, and the latter rain."

But if we labor rightly, we are more sure of success in our spiritual concerns; than the husbandman in things which are temporal: For we have an absolute promise from God, that He will prosper our endeavors if in righteousness, we truly seek Him. Then let us thus seek Him, that He may prosper us, and bless us, in our present, and our future state.

Let us break up our fallow ground, and sow in righteousness, by purifying our nature, and our conduct. Let us sow in mercy, by trusting to God's mercy, for salvation. Let us immediately; without delay; seek the Lord, by thus sowing: For it is time to seek Him. May He rain righteousness upon us by enabling us to grow better and more holy; and to be blessed, in a temporal, a Spiritual, and Heavenly manner.—May we, indeed, reap in His mercy, by being thus blessed.

To conclude.—The text, was addressed, originally, to the Jews. They had sinned; and there was no way for them to escape from the temporal, and spiritual judgments, with which they were threatened, except, by repenting, and reforming: And then trusting to God's mercy.

Their repentance and reformation, should they really have recourse to the same; would be like sowing good seed, which would yield an increase, for their use, their profit, and advantage.

Although, in case they should reform, they could not merit any thing at the hand of God; yet they could hope and expect, that He would mercifully avert the threatened judgments, and condescend to bless them, in a temporal; in a spiritual, and Heavenly point of view.

In order to reform, it was necessary that their hearts, which were filled with worldly lusts and affections, should be purified, and cleansed; and made obedient, and humble. To purify their hearts, would be, like breaking up ground, which is hard, fallow, and uncultivated; and covered with briars, and with noxious weeds.

Too long had they refused to reform, and to be mindful of their duty. Hence, it was time, that they should "seek the Lord;" by repentance; by self-examination; by prayer; by watchfulness; by confession of their sins; by casting off their hypocrisy, their idolatry, their avarice, their pride, and *their trust* for prosperity in their Heathen

customs, and in their own strength: In a word; by obeying God, willingly, and faithfully.

Inasmuch, as, should they thus obey Him, they could never merit His blessing, but, nevertheless, could expect it, through His mercy and compassion; they were directed, in the text to "reap in mercy."

In case, they should speedily obey Him, and reform, without delay; He was pledged, to favor, and to bless them, exceedingly; abundantly; so that the bestowal of His blessings, would be, like raining down righteousness upon them.

Other People, individually; also collectively as nations; are often sinful, and corrupt; and need reformation, like the Israelites; the Jews; to whom the text was originally addressed.—The text, may therefore be considered as an admonition, a command, to all people.

It is too commonly the case, that individuals, communities, and nations; are guilty of pride, and injustice; of avarice, and oppression; of envy, hatred, and hypocrisy; of infidelity, and vain-glory, and Earthly pleasures; of receiving ill-obtained honor,

authority, and applause; of luxury; extravagance, and forbidden indulgences: In a word; of things, which are corruptible and corrupting: Therefore, that they forget God; that they seek Him not; that they continue in unrighteousness; and hence, that He not only threatens, but visits them with judgments: And often overthrows, and destroys them, even amidst their boasted prosperity, and human greatness. — And hence it is, that so many of our race, are destined to misery, in a future state: In another World.

O, that individuals, families, and States, would reform, in all the particulars, wherein, they need reformation.—O, that they would heed the admonition; "Sow to yourselves in righteousness; reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: For it is time to seek the Lord; till He come, and rain righteousness upon you."

May we, my hearers, obey the admonition. — By being righteous, may we sow in righteousness.—By being merciful to others, and by trusting in the mercy of God, may we both sow, and reap in mercy. — By subduing the evil desires of our hearts,

may we break up their fallow ground, and may they be imbued with genuine religion. —By doing these things, may we truly and verily seek the Lord.—May we thus seek Him without delay; knowing, that it is, now, time to seek Him earnestly.—And may He rain upon us righteousness, by enabling us to be good and happy, in the present world, and in that which is to come. Amen.

SERMON XIII.

THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE.

Saint Luke xii. 35.

"LET YOUR LOINS BE GIRDED ABOUT; AND YOUR LIGHTS BURNING."

As the loose and flowing garments, which were worn in Eastern countries, were girded by a girdle around the loins, and were thus prevented from hindering the wearers, when any important business was to be performed; so our temporal cares, avocations, and enjoyments should be properly restrained, and not permitted to hinder us, in the performance of our Christian duty.

As servants in those countries were accustomed to keep their "lights burning," when they waited for their master's return home at night, or were engaged, at night, in any work;—so we, should continually keep

in view, Christ's instructions; which are a Spiritual light, guiding us to what we should do, to be ready for him, when he shall come to call us from this world, by death; or to judge us, after he shall have raised us from the Dead.

Hence, the meaning of his command, when he says to us, "let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning," evidently is, that nothing should divert us from our duty; and, that, by its performance, we should be prepared to meet him, when he shall summon us to death, and the judgment.

This command was indeed, given to his Personal Disciples. Nevertheless, it is obligatory, upon other Christians: Nay; upon all men—at all times—and in all places.

Hence, we should be always ready to discharge our duty. We should neither postpone it, nor desire to postpone it, till another time. No sufficient excuse could be rendered, for now omitting it, even if we were sure of living, and of having opportunity to perform it at a future day.

But life is short, uncertain and evanescent; and what we do, we should do quickly, as though the present moment

were the last, that we should ever be privileged to enjoy.

When the Israelites were about to leave Egypt for Canaan, they had their loins girded; and thus kept themselves in readiness to depart. It was in this condition, that they eat their Passover.

So we, who are soon to take our departure from this world to another, should gird up our loins: In other words; should yield obedience to Christ: And thus be ready, at all times, for our journey.

We should yield this obedience, not reluctantly, but willingly: Not slothfully; but industriously.

As one of the children of the Prophets, at the bidding of Elisha, quickly girded up his loins, went to Ramoth Gilead, and anointed Jehu to be king of Israel; so we, according to the command of Christ, should immediately have our loins girded, by being ready and willing to obey him, our Divinely anointed King—and we should be zealously engaged, by rendering to him active, and heart-felt obedience.

He represents our life as "a warfare;" and us, as "his soldiers." Our sins, and the

great adversary of men, are the enemies that we are obliged to encounter. If we would perform our duty, by rendering him the service which he requires of us, we should endeavor to overcome effectually, and without delay, these enemies.

For this purpose, we should keep ourselves disengaged from the vanities of the world: For, if we suffer them to seduce our affections; instead of performing our duty, we shall be guilty of neglecting it: Instead of doing the work that he has assigned us, we shall be culpable, by deserting his service.

We must obey, not merely a part, but the whole that he enjoins. Otherwise he will condemn us as he condemned a certain Ruler, who kept the Divine commands generally, but violated that which forbids covetousness.—We should obey him, not only by having faith and repentance, and the other internal graces of religion; but by celebrating the Holy Eucharist; by receiving, and privileging our children to receive baptism; and by observing the other external ordinances of the Church: Otherwise he will say to us "these things ought

ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone."

To follow him, is, to perform our duty: And we should follow him without delay. Nothing should prevent us. What pretenses for delay, could be more plausible, than to bury a Father, and to bid farewell to Relatives and Friends? And yet he censured certain individuals for making these pretenses.

Let us, then, promptly obey him; like the Patriarch Abraham, who, when Divinely commanded to leave his kindred and his country, and to sojourn in a Foreign land, immediately obeyed. Let us imitate the Apostles, who when he said to them, "follow me," immediately "arose and followed him."

He has graciously condescended to instruct us in our duty: To teach us, both by his example and his precepts: To suffer, and to die for us, and in Heaven to intercede, in our behalf.

Are we not under the strongest obligations, to love and obey him, for favors so unmerited?—Since, by these favors, he has given full and ample proof of his friendship

and affection for us, shall we not yield him our gratitude, our love and obedience in return? Shall we not, by the performance of our duty, prove, that we are glad of the opportunity of being his disciples—his followers—his soldiers; and that we rejoice in acknowledging his kindness?

The performance of our duty, improves and adorns our nature; and is calculated to make us wise and happy, both here, and hereafter. How can we be willing to fail in this performance, since such are its effects? Its glorious results?

If the Israelites were prompted to duty, by the promise of a temporal inheritance, how should we be prompted and encouraged by the promise of an inheritance, which is Heavenly and Eternal?—And when Christ lays upon us his injunctions, let us be ready to answer him, as the Sons of Reuben answered Joshua, when they said to him; "all that thou commandest us we will do; and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go."

Secondly.—If we would perform our duty aright: If we would keep our loins girded, and our lights burning as we ought: If we

would prove ourselves to be good soldiers of our Divine Master Christ; we must be continually on our guard against the temptations and devices of Satan.

He is acquainted with the weakness of our nature; and with the means that he must employ, to gain access to our hearts, and to captivate our affections.

Our natural depravity renders us liable to be seduced by him; and there is danger, that he will ruin us, except we watch and resist his attempts.

He excites ambition, and other evil passions; blinds the understanding and other faculties of the soul; and disposes those whom he deceives, to the neglect of their duty, and to the commission of sin.

If men become afraid of his deception, and strive to avoid it, he endeavors to dispel their fears, by persuading them that he is merely an imaginary being — a mere phantom of ignorance, and of priestcraft.

Full of all subtlety and mischief, he artfully assails the Church; represents its ministry and worship, its doctrines and Institutions, in a false point of view, and strives to subvert it by every means in his power.

But we are not obliged to be victims to his wiles. Reason and Revelation discover to us, not only our duty, and the advantages of performing it, but the heinousness of sin, and the misery to which it leads. We are also constantly admonished by conscience, to do what is right, and to abstain from what is wrong, that it may be well with us, in time, and in Eternity. The Spirit of God, is likewise striving within us, to persuade us to the renunciation of sin, and to the practice of piety and virtue, that we may be blessed, in this world, and the next.

If we listen to what reason and conscience proclaim — if we submit to the influence of the Spirit — and strive to do our duty, we shall be protected against the crafts and assaults of Satan: God will protect us. He will be our refuge, and our strength. He will preserve our "going out," and "our coming in." He will be our keeper and our strong salvation.

Thirdly.—To perform our duty, occasionally, is not enough. We must perform it habitually, and continually. As soldiers of Christ, we should be daily and constantly disciplined in practical religion, that we

may be able to overcome sin and Satan, our spiritual enemies, and keep them in subjection.

If we grow negligent and careless, with respect to the duty required of us, the adversary will take advantage of our slothfulness. He will assault and destroy our piety; and our spiritual ruin will ensue.

We should therefore be vigilant and active in the service of Christ. With untiring efforts; with unremitted exertions, we should perform, whatever he enjoins: Whatever, according to the religion of his Gospel, he has made to be our duty.

Many professors of Christianity, are too inattentive to the cause that they have espoused; and to their spiritual interests. Instead of going forward, they go backward, in the paths of virtue, and religion. Instead of adhering to the apostle's admonition to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," they shrink, notwithstanding their profession, even from the ordinary duties of such soldiers.

Thus their loins, which were once girded, have been loosed: And their lights which were once burning, have been extinguished

And, as the foolish virgins, whose light had expired, were not admitted to the marriage, so, such professors, except they repent, and reform, will not be admitted to the presence of their Lord.

And, what shall we say of those who make no profession? Who have not embraced religion? Who have never attempted to gird their loins, or to light their lamps: Who have neglected, and who are still neglecting "the one thing needful:" Who reject the service of Christ: And utterly refuse to be his soldiers, and his servants?

Exposed to the wiles of the adversary; and to present and to future ruin, they should reform their disposition, and their conduct, that their doom may be averted.

As reasonable creatures we are all bound to regard our own interest. We should therefore yield obedience to what Christ has commanded: For upon such obedience, our destiny depends.

He is the "Judge of Quick and Dead." Suppose we were now summoned before him to be judged; should we expect him to acquit, or condemn us? Are we now living in a manner which he approves? Do we

sustain the Christian character? Do we love and worship God? Do we love our fellow men, and endeavor to promote their happiness? Do we co-operate with the Holy Spirit, which is striving to renovate our nature? Have we faith in Christ as our Redeemer and our Saviour? Do we renounce the pomps and the vanities of the world? Do we take the Bible, as the revealed word of God, and the Rule of Faith? Do we adhere to the Sacraments and ordinances, which Christ has ordained for the Christian Church? Have we holiness of heart and of life? Do we heartily embrace Christianity, which reason and conscience, and Revelation, declare to be from God?

If so; then may we be well assured, of much consolation in this world, and of uninterrupted enjoyment in the world to come.

It is true, that in this life, we shall be afflicted. But by Divine Grace, we shall be comforted notwithstanding. The affliction, by chastening us, will make us better, and consequently happier.

Happy indeed are they, who guided by [illegible]ion, make their duty, their first object.

They have more enjoyment than others, in their present probationary state: And in a future existence, they will be blessed with a happy immortality.

The favors, which Providence now bestows upon them, are a foretaste of future, and of greater blessings: And their present affliction, if they bear it as they ought, will, according to the sentiment of an apostle, work out for them, an Eternal weight of glory. Cheered with the hope, and assurance of Heaven, they are enabled to rejoice, at their spiritual prospects.

But the irreligious who are neglectful of their duty, are very far from being happy. Their present pleasures, are embittered, by ill-boding fears for the future;—fears which render their afflictions and adversities more severe and distressing.

As the impious Belshazzar, though reminded of the consequence of his wickedness; and though he trembled at the consequence, continued notwithstanding in his reveling, till overwhelmed by destruction; so the irreligious and unrighteous very frequently continue in their sin, till destroyed "without remedy."

We however should be guided by wisdom. We should make the necessary preparation for the future. As soldiers of Christ, let us endeavor to obtain over our spiritual enemies the victory, which will be rewarded with Eternal life.

If we "endure hardness" as good soldiers, we shall, eventually have the victory over our last enemy, which is death: For, we shall be delivered from it, by being raised from the dead, never again to be subjected to its power.

Since our present life, is represented as a "warfare;" let us have our loins girded; and let us discharge our duty; that in the end, we may be able to say with an apostle, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course: I have kept the faith: Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

As our life is also compared to a race; and as Heaven is the prize; let us run in such a manner, that we may obtain a prize of so high a value. Let us heed the admonition: "So run, that ye may obtain." And our future happiness, is described under the similitude of a Marriage Feast; let

ı put on the wedding garment, which is ghteousness. Let our loins be girded. ɜt our lights be burning. And let us be ɪe men, who are faithful servants, "wait-g" for their Lord. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

ON BEARING FALSE WITNESS.

Exodus xx. 35.

"THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR."

FALSE witness, is an intentional misrepresentation, of the words, the conduct, or the motives of men; and is a source of most mischievous consequences.

These consequences, in Judicial proceedings, are a wrong disposition of property; an unjust deprivation of character, of liberty and of life; and many other evils too numerous to be detailed.

In the daily intercourse of men with one another, the consequences in question, are not only a loss of reputation and a consequent inability to engage with usual convenience, profit and advantage, in the common

concerns of life; but also, mortified feelings, from which, disease and death, not unfrequently result.

As men are to be judged according to their deeds in the body; he who misrepresents others; who before a human court, or in ordinary conversation; is guilty of bearing "false witness," must be responsible for his conduct; and in the day of judgment, be subject to a condemnatory sentence.

An oath, should be kept inviolate. Whatever may be its form, its meaning is always the same. It is an invocation of God's vengeance, and a renunciation of His favor, if the truth be not fully and unreservedly declared, without hesitancy, or prevarication. He who violates it is guilty of a two-fold sin: Of uttering what is false in itself: And of disregarding his oath, which binds him very solemnly to the utterance of truth.

Oaths, when imposed by public authority; or when taken, not to gratify a vain taste for swearing, but for the good of individuals, and the Public, appear to be justified by Scripture.

God directed the Israelites to swear by

His name; Saint Paul used an oath by saying to the Corinthians, "I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not to Corinth:" And when the High Priest said to the Saviour, "I adjure you by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ;" the Saviour answered him without objecting to the oath.

Hence, we explain the Saviour's prohibition, "swear not at all," as referring only to profanity and unnecessary swearing in common conversation.

An important use of an oath is, that he who takes it, may be more than ordinarily impressed with a sense of his duty to declare the truth; and of the danger that results from incurring the penalty attached to falsehood.

An additional use of an oath is, to make the impression, that by bearing false witness, in violation of the oath, not only the Divine command to tell the truth, but the oath itself, which is a promise that should be kept in the highest degree sacred, will be broken; and therefore the danger of punishment increased: For he who is deliberately guilty of breaking the Divine com-

mand under consideration, and such promise also, a promise the most sacred and solemn that can be made, is, doubtless, more guilty, and more obnoxious to punishment, than he who inadvertently, without being admonished by the sanctions of an oath, occasionally varies from the truth.

The final use of an oath is, that he who is bound by it, shall declare the truth, that Civil, and Ecclesiastical adjudications, may be properly and rightly made: And that individuals and communities may have greater assurance of being correctly informed concerning what is necessary for them to know.

But, notwithstanding the extreme wickedness and danger of violating oaths, is there not reason to fear that they are often violated? That men are often guilty of deliberate and willful perjury? Have not some of us heard men bear witness in our Courts, when it would require the charity that "believeth all things," to believe that they intended their words to be true?

Why is it, that their sense of right and wrong; their knowledge of God's hatred to falsehood; their fear of punishment, and all

the sanctions of their oaths, and of religion, are not, at all times, sufficient to restrain them in this respect?

It is because of their depravity: And they must be renewed in the spirit of their minds, before there can be any certainty of their adhering strictly to truth, and to other duties.

But, although the violation of an oath, must, in general, be considered as a sin of a more heinous nature than other falsehoods, yet, willful and malicious lies, fabricated and reported, for the purpose of injuring individuals or communities, are sins but little inferior to perjury.—Although the fabricators have not taken upon themselves the obligation of an oath, their sin is very great, and the mischief produced by it, cruel, and often very ruinous.

Such lies, are a deadly species of "false witness;" and against their authors a dreadful penalty is Divinely denounced.

The crime of lying, may perhaps be somewhat extenuated, by shewing it to be committed by inadvertence, without malevolence or ill-will. But they who commit it in this less malignant, this extenuated form,

should recollect that inadvertence is not absolutely excusable: That if they sin inadvertently, by bearing false witness, or otherwise, there is danger, that in the final judgment, they will be accounted as "slothful," and therefore as "wicked" servants.

Then should they who utter falsehood of any description, correct themselves. They should check, subdue, eradicate, the propensity by which they are influenced to speak of others, in a false, a disingenuous, a disparaging, or an evil manner. They should reform both their disposition and their practice: For they should ever remember the inspired declaration, that "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

One falsehood may indeed be more maliciously uttered, and more productive of mischief than another. It may therefore be more severely punished. But falsehood of every sort, is odious to God: Is forbidden by His law. Will it not then, be punished according to His justice?

In Scripture, liars are represented, as the children of the Devil. He is called their "father," and "a liar from the beginning:"

And when the sentence, "depart ye cursed into Everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels," shall be pronounced; against whom, if not against liars, will it be uttered?

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

This command enjoins it as a duty to preserve the reputation of others. It is broken by inventing, or by circulating what is slanderous. When this is done in sport, it is in imitation of the madman, who for his diversion, sets fire to buildings, and commits other depredations.

But whilst the madman may be pardoned, as having no malicious intention, the slanderer, though he may pretend to be in sport, is justly condemned and abhorred; for his sport proceeds from malice in his heart.

For the most part, however, sport is not his object, either really or in pretense. Sometimes his slander proceeds from a view, but a mistaken view to benefit himself: But oftener from the sole design of injuring his neighbor.

We should not fail to observe what in general is not sufficiently considered; that the moral turpitude of circulating slander

at "second hand," is as great as the original fabrication of such slander. Hence, the most excellent advice of a Christian Judge. "Never," says judge Hale to his children, "receive nor retail slander."

They who invent, and they who circulate it, are alike guilty of bearing false witness: Alike injurious to society: And alike subject to the condemnation of Him who knows the secrets of the heart, and who will judge all, according to their motives, and according to their works.

Nor are they without fault, who listen with too much credulity to slanderous reports. "Be very cautious of believing ill of your neighbor," is an admonition, worthy to be engraved on the minds and hearts of all. It is not, however, opposed to the propriety of believing a report which is true and well authenticated. It is merely a caution against being over credulous.

A scandalous report, should be carefully and candidly examined before believed.—Duty, however, frequently requires us to abstain from its examination; especially when its truth or its falsity, can be of but little or of no concern to us; and as often

happens, the prospect of doing more harm than good by examining it is apparent.

Consequently, we are not always justified in circulating a scandalous report, though we know it to be true: For we should do wrong in spreading it, merely to gratify our humor;—our malevolence, or other evil passions, when we are convinced, that its publicity, by bringing disgrace, not only on him, against whom it is raised, but on his relatives, or others, with whom he associates, would be productive of more injury than benefit.—It is sometimes better that a bad person should go without detection, than to involve others in difficulty and ruin, by detecting him.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

How often is this command violated;—by ascribing the good conduct of a person to bad motives,—by exaggerating his vices,—by ridiculing his virtues,—by censuring him too severely for his frailties,—by taunting him for his ignorance and mistakes,—by misrepresenting his words and actions,—by treating him with neglect, through prejudice or groundless suspicion,—by mischievous

innuendoes relative to his principles and character,—by fabricating and spreading to his discredit, slanderous reports:—In short; by all the ways that the ingenuity of men can devise to calumniate one another.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

This command requires, that men refrain from what is slanderous and false, not only in their words, but also in their behavior, with respect to their fellow men: For when they treat the virtuous and good, with neglect and contempt, they make the impression on others, that the persons thus treated are unworthy of civil and respectful treatment.

It is proverbial, that "actions speak plainer than words:" And to asperse the character of the well deserving, by conducting disrespectfully towards them, is as plain a violation of the command contained in the text, as to speak of them in a slanderous and mendacious manner.

They who live scandalous lives, are not, indeed, entitled to our attention and respect, equally with the good. But we should have proof of their bad principles and conduct, before we treat them as unworthy of our esteem and society.

If we disesteem and avoid others, from no better evidence of their unworthiness than some vague rumor to their discredit; a rumor which, perhaps, has originated, and been put in circulation by envy, hatred or malice, we shall often be liable to treat them with undeserved disrespect; and thus be guilty of bearing false witness against them. Before we credit such rumor, we should have satisfactory proof of its being true.

It may be partially true, but exaggerated; for men are prone to exaggerate scandalous reports, and to magnify the faults of one another. Hence, whilst we should never countenance our fellow men, in what is criminal or vicious, we should be ready to make due and reasonable allowance in their favor, when their characters were assailed.

We should not represent even the notoriously wicked and vicious, as being more vile and vicious than they are. If we thus represent them, we disregard the command in the text; for we can bear false witness against the wicked and unworthy, as well as against the more virtuous and upright.

The Christian law of love requires, that [illegible]eat both the virtuous and vicious;

both our friends and our enemies with kindness: That we sympathize with them in their sufferings; that we strive to do them good; that we defend them when falsely aspersed; that we be careful, not to believe or to publish what is false concerning them.

We may, and we should, prefer the persons and society of the virtuous. But the happiness of the wicked, even though they be our enemies, should be dear to us, and we should endeavor to promote it. For this purpose, we should be kind and obliging towards them, and should pray for their welfare. We should strive by affectionate treatment and proper reproof, to persuade them to the practice of goodness; and surely we should never calumniate or falsely asperse their character by any species of false witness.

Since men are prone to bear false witness, they should be assiduous in guarding against so prevalent a sin. They should guard against it, by treating one another with tenderness and respect, with benevolence and forbearance, with good will and charity, being careful of their reputation, overlooking their frailties, forgiving them their tres-

passes, rejoicing in their prosperity, assisting them in adversity, praying for the advancement of their spiritual interest, and by treating them in all respects, according to the Divine law of love, which requires every one, in order to be happy, to conduct towards others, as he wishes others to conduct towards himself.

We ourselves, desire to be respected and well treated. We are unwilling to be slandered. Hence, we should never slander others: And we should recognize their right to require and receive from us, civility, respect, and good treatment.

But, are we not often wanting in love to our neighbors; and therefore disposed to require, that they observe certain rules of conduct, to which we are too little inclined to adhere with strictness and exactness?

If we thus demand of them what we are unwilling to reciprocate, then should we endeavor, for the future, to obey more scrupulously and strictly, that law of love, to which the Scriptures obliges us, with respect to our brethren.

Were mankind sufficiently governed by law, they would be obedient to all the

Divine commands.—They would honor their parents—refrain from murder and voluptuousness;—from covetousness and theft, and false witness; thus fulfilling their duty to their fellow men, according to the Second table of the Decalogue. With respect to the Supreme Being, "the one living and true God," they would reverence and honor Him, and do Him homage: They would "worship Him in spirit and in truth:" In short; they would "have no other Gods before Him." They would be free from Idolatrous propensities and practices: From taking His name in vain; And from profaning; from desecrating His holy Sabbath; and would thus, according to the First table of the decalogue, perform the duty required of them, in relation to Himself.

Of the case before us, we are now taking the same view as the Apostle John takes of it: For like the Apostle Paul, and in imitation of the Saviour, he represents, that love towards God, and towards men, is the sum of the whole Divine law: Because this love is required by the Law; and produces obedience to all else that the Law enjoins.

He further represents, that without love

to men, there can be no love for God: For says that Apostle; "if any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar."

If then the Apostle is correct in his views, it is certain, that love to our brethren of the human family is necessary, in order to love and obey God as the Divine law requires. And we know from our reason, and our feelings; our observation and experience, and the whole tenor of the Scriptures, that this love to our brethren, is also necessary, in order to perform our duty towards them in obedience to the same Divine law.

Thus it is expedient, it is necessary, it is all important, to love our fellow men, that we may abstain from bearing false witness against them, and from treating them in any respect wrongfully: And also, that we may be disposed, and may labor to do them good; to perform for them kind offices; to promote their present and future welfare: In short; that we may properly discharge the duty which we owe them,—a duty expressed by the injunction; "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Equally important and necessary is it, to love our fellow men, in order to be able to

love God: To refrain from irreverence and disrespect towards Him; to worship and to serve Him: In short; to perform our duty towards Him according to His command; "shou shalt love the Lord thy God;" and according to the injunction; "thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

What stronger incentives to the performance of our duty to God, and our fellow men, could He afford us, than a deliverance from Hell;—and the enjoyment of Heaven? The very incentives by which He proposes to stimulate us to this duty.

If Heaven or Hell is the place of our destination according to the performance or the non-performance of the duty in question, who of us shall be so unwise, so foolish and so wicked, as to leave such duty unperformed?

Not only licentiousness and vice; but very often the wisdom and the learning of the world, exclude spiritual wisdom and knowledge from the minds of many, who therefore affect to consider future happiness and misery, not as coming realities. But, at the final judgment, when the veil of fu-

turity shall be raised, and the scenes of another world shall open to their view, their mistake will awfully appear. Of this mistake, they indeed, even now, in the present life, seem to have many apprehensions. For, as we read, "the wicked are not at rest."

May we, my hearers, during the time of our present probation, avoid such mistake. May we faithfully discharge our duty: And may happiness hereafter be our portion. Amen.

SERMON XV.

A SERMON FOR ADVENT SUNDAY.

Saint Luke i. 46, 47.

"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord:"
"And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

Such was the language of Mary, previously to the Saviour's birth; and in view of that event.

We, who are living subsequently to the event in question, ought, in view of it, to imitate her, by rejoicing in the Saviour; magnifying him as the Lord; and acknowledging him as God.

This is that season of the year, which, under the name of "the Advent," the Church has appointed for such pious and special meditations on his birth or nativity, as may qualify us for duly celebrating, at the proper time, so wonderful an occur-

rence, by magnifying in an especial manner, his Holy name; and by rejoicing in him publicly, as "God manifest in the flesh;" and as having come to save us.

We ought, indeed, at all times, to magnify him, and to rejoice in him. But, to be enabled to do so truly and from the heart, we must be his disciples: In other words, we must conform our hearts and our lives to the end, the design, of his manifestation in the flesh.

This design, was to cleanse us from our sin: To purify us, and make us righteous in his sight; that we might be partakers of a spiritual—a Heavenly Inheritance beyond the grave.

But, he will never carry into effect this design, except we co-operate with him, by endeavoring to be made righteous; to be purified and cleansed; and thereby to be the heirs of such Inheritance.

We ourselves, must therefore endeavor, must labor, to be righteous, before he will make us so, and thereby enable us to rejoice in him as our Saviour, according to the design of his personal appearance in *the* world.

He has, in himself, given us an example of purity and righteousness: And we read of him that he was "Holy, harmless, and undefiled."

We ought to follow his example. To enable us to follow it, to be good, to be upright and righteous; he has died for us, pursuant to his design in becoming incarnate, and appearing as we read of him, "in the fashion of a man."

By virtue of his death; In other words, by Divine Grace given through the merits of his death; we have power, he has clothed us with ability, to be holy, to obey his commands, to magnify his name, to rejoice in him as the Lord of all things, to trust in him as our Saviour and our God, and finally, to be happy in the future.

It is, in fact, in consideration of being judged worthy to escape from the woe, and to attain to the happiness, of another world, if we live righteously in this; that we should be inclined, and should strive thus to live.

It is a truth taught by reason, and more clearly and fully by Revelation, that God, at the end of the world, will judge all men,

and reward every person, according to his works.

Throughout the whole Scripture, the certainty, not only of future happiness as resulting from the performance of duty in the present life; but of future misery as resulting from the non-performance of that duty, is fully and explicitly revealed.

Thus mankind are furnished with the strongest of all possible motives to perform their duty; a motive having Everlasting happiness for its object.

Whilst many are giving satisfactory evidence that they are duly influenced by this motive; are attaining to the object to which it leads; are enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour; there are, on the contrary, many who are furnishing no such evidence; whose inclination to sin, is continually preventing them from a discharge of their duty, and exposing them to the misery of the future.

The former class of persons endeavor to become acquainted with their duty. Hence, they derive instruction from reason and Revelation, and from the experience of themselves and of other Christians. They [illegible]ive also to perform their duty: For a

knowledge of it, without, at the same time performing it, would be to them a painful acquisition. They renounce whatever comes in collision with its performance, upon which, they know, that their spiritual and Eternal interests depend. They receive Holy Writ as their true and proper guide. They find it "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness:" For enabling them to magnify the Saviour as the Lord; to rejoice in him as God; and to become the recipients of blessedness hereafter.

By the Parable of the poor man, whose soul, after his decease, was transferred to a place of happiness; and of the rich man, whose soul, after he had died, was confined in a place of torment; and by other parts of the Sacred Volume; it is evident, that in the interval between death and the resurrection: In other words; that whilst the soul is separated from the body, there is a state of happiness different from that which will be in Heaven after the dissolution of the present world: And also, that there is a place of misery different from that which will be in Hell, after the resurrection and the final judgment.

We may also observe, that they who shall be happy or miserable, in the Eternal World, after the resurrection and the judgment, will, by no means be so, in the same degree: For Revelation plainly instructs us, that in that Eternal World, men will be rewarded or punished, in proportion as their character, their principles, and conduct, have been good or evil, in their present state of trial, in this life: Much being required from those to whom much has been given; and but little from those on whom but little has been bestowed.

The time of the resurrection of the Dead, and of the General judgment, which will immediately succeed the resurrection, is known, not to men, nor to Angels; but to God only. It is indeed to be, at the end of the world. But the time when the end of the world shall come, is unknown, except to Him who is Infinite in knowledge.

Our Saviour Christ is constituted Judge: For he is "the only begotten Son of the Father:" And we read, that "the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son."

Glorious indeed, will be the execution of the judgment by our Saviour, at his Second

advent. Attended by his angels, he will descend to the Earth, whilst the trump of God will be made to sound. Then, sitting "on the throne of his glory," and all nations being gathered before him, he will judge them.

They in the grave, will rise and be judged. The good, who will be said to be dead in Christ, will rise first; and afterwards the wicked; whilst they, who without having tasted death, shall be alive at the second advent, this second coming of the Saviour, will be "changed," and required to receive judgment.

Inasmuch as we know not how soon we shall be placed "before the judgment seat of Christ:" How soon we shall be made to answer at his tribunal, for the deeds done in our bodies: For our thoughts, our words, our principles and actions; we ought to be speedily, diligently, and steadfastly, good and righteous, inwardly in our hearts, and outwardly in our lives, that we may at all times be ready, properly prepared, to be judged and acquitted by him, and be admitted to his Heavenly rest.

In no other way, than by being good and

righteous, can we be prepared; duly and rightly qualified, to exult, like Mary, in the first coming of the Saviour. In no other way, can we be qualified like Mary, to meet him, to exult in him, and receive his approbation; when at his second coming, he shall appear in glorious majesty to judge the world.

Our righteousness, should be that which consists in faith, repentance, and good works; that is, in holiness of heart, and of life. Such righteousness, will cause us to say, in the language of Mary, "my soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour:" And will also cause our sentiments, and feelings to correspond with the language. Such righteousness, will recommend us to the Divine favor, "in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment."

Then let us magnify our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; by ascribing to him, praise, honor and thanksgiving. Let us rejoice in him as our God. Let us exult and be glad in him as that glorious and Divine Being, who is able and willing to save us, if we yield him our obedience. Let us especially,

in this season of "Advent," praise and magnify his name, that we may be the better prepared for rightly and duly celebrating his nativity, and by thus celebrating it, be the more inclined to reverence, magnify and praise him; to serve, worship and obey him.

We should exalt, and magnify his name, because in his human nature, he is pure, immaculate, and holy: Because in his Divine nature, he is clothed with the attributes of Deity: Because he is the Creator, and Sustainer, the Benefactor and Redeemer of the human race: And especially because as a Redeemer, he gives to us and to all men, the privilege of being righteous; and, consequently of being happy, in the world to come.

We should indeed magnify and honor the Father and the Holy Ghost, as well as Christ: For each of these is, verily and truly God. The Scripture teaches, that in the Godhead, there are these Three. That they are also "of one substance, power and Eternity:" Therefore that God is one indivisible and Eternal Being, existing in a Trinity of Persons.

Let us therefore rejoice in the Triune God. Let us live virtuously, religiously and Godly; that we may be enabled to rejoice in Him rightly according to His will.

Let us live, as we ought to live, in the performance of our duty. Let us be, as we ought to be, possessed of the Christian graces. Then, shall we be able to say, and shall be inclined to say, with the Psalmist; "I will magnify thee O God my king; and I will praise thy name."—"Every day will I give thanks unto thee."—"Great is the Lord, and marvelous—worthy to be praised."

If according to the Divine commands, we be good and righteous, we shall be enabled, even in adversity and affliction, to rejoice. To say with one of the Ancient prophets; "I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation."

If we serve the Lord, He will be our support; our protector, comforter and friend. He will repair our losses, supply our wants; and lead us safely through the difficulties and dangers to which we are exposed.

In the language of a prophet, we are therefore, by serving God, privileged to say; I greatly rejoice in the Lord; my

soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; He hath covered me with a robe of righteousness."

However much we may here be troubled, or impoverished, persecuted or despised; yet, we should consider that God, if we trust in Him, will be our refuge: Will extend to us relief: And will enable us to rejoice in Him as our all sufficient portion.

He is the strength, as well as the salvation of His people. He will therefore, if we serve Him, enable us to rejoice and be happy, in a good degree, in the present world; and to an extent that will be Infinite and Eternal in the world to come.

Then let us serve Him "with a perfect heart and willing mind." Let us worship Him "in spirit and in truth." Let us fear Him with a filial fear, and be obedient to His commands. Let us love and adore Him, and seek to do His will. Let us be resigned to His Providence, submissive to His government, and thankful for His mercies.

Let us live in such a manner, that we may be able both in life, and in death to say: "My soul doth magnify the Lord; and

my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: And may God in His mercy, through Chris save us with an Everlasting salvation, an bless us, with Eternal blessings, in the mai sions prepared in Heaven for the righteou Amen.

SERMON XVI.

A SERMON FOR CHRISTMAS.

Saint Luke ii. 14.

'GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST: AND ON EARTH, PEACE,—GOOD WILL TOWARDS MEN."

THESE words were uttered by angels, at the nativity of the Saviour. One of them had conveyed the "glad tidings" of that nativity to a company of shepherds. Then there was "suddenly" with him, as we read, a multitude of the Heavenly host; of other Angels; praising God, in the beautiful, the sublime, the inimitable language of the text.

Surely that nativity was a wonderful event. It was surely of the greatest importance. It was surely to result in consequences great and glorious; in exalted and extraordinary good; or those Angelic, those

Spiritual and sinless beings that dwell in the Heavenly mansions; in the presencé and around the throne of Jehovah; would not have descended to the Earth, and exultingly with joy raised their voices, in acclamations of praise to the Creator; and in predictions of peace and good will to mankind.

That nativity was indeed of extraordinary; nay, of Infinite importance to the human race. It was evidence, it was proof, that the Saviour, who had so long been expected, and who had been Prophetically announced as "the desire of all nations," had eventually appeared: That as "God manifest in the flesh," he would establish amongst men his spiritual kingdom; would perpetuate it on the earth during the continuance of time; would then transfer it to Heaven; and would there give it a durable, an Everlasting existence.

The nativity of which we speak, pertained to a series of events enabling the human family to regain their title to future and Eternal happiness; a title which by their sin they had forfeited. Such happiness redounds to God's glory. Hence it was, that in the nativity in question, Angels

were interested: For they are ever interested in whatever is promotive of human happiness, and the glory of the Supreme Being.

"Glory to God," was therefore a proper theme for the Heavenly host, on receiving intelligence, that Jesus the Saviour; that Christ the Messiah, had been born in the city of Bethlehem.

Men, more than Angels, however, were interested, as they now are, and as they ever will be, in the birth of the Blessed Jesus. For except that birth had occurred, the plan of human salvation would not have been executed, and human happiness would forever have been lost.

If therefore the birth, the nativity of Jesus Christ, was an occurrence, which rightly and properly occasioned Angels, whose happiness was not materially involved in it, to shout in ascriptions of praise to their Maker; how can men, whose happiness and salvation depend on it, withhold such ascriptions?

"Shall angels sing praises, and Seraphs rejoice,
"And man not be joyful; not join his glad voice;
"Since Christ has descended from mansions above;
"To welcome mankind to the arms of his love?"

It well becomes men, it is indeed their duty, to rejoice with a holy joy; to exult in a religious manner; and to offer unto God, thanksgiving, and praise, and honor, and great glory; in consideration that by His appointment and His counsel, the Saviour, who is their Lord and Redeemer, who is the son of man and the son of God, who is possessed of Divinity and humanity, and who is therefore both God and man, has become incarnate, and made atonement for their sin; so that by Divine Grace, given through the efficacy of that atonement, they are enabled to repent, and to live soberly, righteously and Godly, and thereby to attain to a happy immortality, which, by their inherent, and their actual sin, they have forfeited and lost.

My Brethren: It well becomes us, at all times; and especially on the anniversary of the Saviour's birth, to glorify God. Well may we say to Him; "glory be to thee O God:" "We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee;"—"for all thy goodness and loving kindness to us and to all men; and above all, for thine inestimable love,"

in sending thine only begotten Son, to take upon himself "the form and the fashion of a man;" and to offer himself a sacrifice for the sin of men; for giving them thy Divine Grace; and for affording them the means of securing, of obtaining for themselves, a Heavenly inheritance.

The joy, with which we should be filled, should be, not of an Earthly and vain nature; but of a Heavenly, a holy, a religious character. Hence, it should be accompanied, attended, intermingled, with a penitent sorrow for sin; with a lively and steadfast faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the three Divine persons in the Godhead; and also with virtuous and righteous acts; in short; with all those internal qualities of the heart, and those external properties of conduct, of which Christianity, the religion of the Gospel is constituted.

Secondly.—The peace, and the good will, announced to mankind, by Angels, in the language of the text, should be considered, not only as proper causes, of joy to the intelligent creatures of Heaven and of earth, but also as proper and just reasons, why God should be glorified and praised by such creatures.

At the original creation of man, the good will and peace, which we are now considering, existed between him and God: For he was then innocent and holy; was obedient to God's Divine law; was filled with reverence and love, and a filial fear towards his Maker; was influenced by no motives or desires, passions or propensities, but those which were good; was governed by no principles but those which were right; and was accustomed to no practices, and swayed by no habits but those which were righteous. Hence it was, that peace, good will and love, were proffered to him, and were exercised towards him, by the Creator, and were accepted and reciprocated by him.

But by becoming, in consequence of his voluntary sin, corrupt and disobedient, he was affected with enmity and hostility, with ill will and hatred, towards the Author of his being, who could no longer be at peace with him, and continue to impart to him, good will and spiritual favors, and Heavenly benedictions, and preserve with him spiritual communion and a holy intercourse.

God, according to the holiness and justice of His nature, cannot be at peace with men,

or any of His moral agents, and continue to make them the subjects of His beneficence and good will, when they corrupt themselves by a violation of His law; by acting in opposition to His commands; by yielding to sinful and wicked temptations; and by suffering or allowing themselves to be tainted by vicious and vile appetites and passions, and to be led astray by the same, from the path of duty.

He is willing; He desires, to have with His moral creatures, a holy and continued peace. He is willing and desirous, that they should forever be recipients of His good will and His choicest blessings. But He will not, He cannot, according to His nature and His law, extend to them these favors, give to them these privileges, bestow on them these inestimable benefits, except on the terms that He prescribes; in other words; except they repent of sin, believe in His existence and His promises, and be imbued with holiness and righteousness. By Divine Grace given them through the atonement made by Christ, He enables them thus to repent, thus to believe, and thus to be imbued.

Hence we may easily perceive, that if there had been no incarnation and nativity of Christ, there would have been for them no atonement: Consequently they would not have received the Divine Grace; and would not have been able to repent and be holy; so that the peace and the good will which originally existed between them and God, and which by their sin they have forfeited and lost, they could never have regained; and they would have been Everlastingly under the Divine wrath. The penalty of their sin, even Eternal misery, would have been inflicted on them.

But glory to God: He has provided a way through Christ, whereby there may be a restoration of peace and good will between Himself and all men; so that we and all others, are privileged to work out our salvation, and attain to the felicity, the blessedness, the happiness, the honors, the glories and the joys, of a future, an enduring, and a Heavenly world.

But if we feel in our bosoms, no holy joy, on account of the fact, that the Saviour has become incarnate to save us; if we have no disposition to honor and glorify

God for placing us in a state of salvability, through the incarnation and nativity, the death and resurrection, the ascension and intercession of Christ: If by refusing to be good and holy, we refuse to make due improvement of Divine Grace: In other words; if we quench, oppose, and resist the Holy Spirit, which is striving, and working, and operating, in our minds, our consciences and hearts; to convince us of sin, to reprove us for the same, and to persuade us to forsake it; and to teach and persuade us, to know and perform our duty: Then, on the one hand, we shall lose all Heavenly enjoyments; and on the other hand, "be as miserable as we now make ourselves sinful."

They who have no joy at the advent of Christ, and who are not disposed to praise the Almighty and glorify His name for that advent, should consider, that the fault is to be attributed, not to God, but themselves. If they are without faith, holiness and repentance, and therefore, without a well grounded hope of Heaven; their situation results from their own perverseness and spiritual indolence.

Let us, my Brethren, in a pious and devout manner, ever be joyful and glad in the Saviour. Let us ever praise the Most High and ascribe to Him glory; for sending His only begotten Son, to be a propitiation for our sins. May we ever have peace and reconciliation with God: And between Him and us, may there ever be good will and love, in this world and the next; in time and Eternity.

May we ever realize, that "the peace of God which passeth all understanding, keeps our hearts and minds, in the knowledge and the love of God, and of His son Jesus Christ our Lord:" And may we experience, that "the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is amongst us, and remains with us," individually, and also in our collective capacity as a church.

Thirdly.—The angelic announcement of peace and good will, an announcement made in the presence and the hearing of Jewish shepherds, at the birth of Jesus, the spiritual king of Jews and of Gentiles, should be considered, as likewise referring to the social intercourse of men; to their feelings, and their conduct, towards one another.

In consequence of their depravity, occasioned by their sin and their transgression, they are too often, and too generally possessed of ill will and embittered feelings, towards their fellow men, in relation to whom, their conduct, is therefore, too frequently, too generally, and too extensively fraught, with hostility, instead of peace; with duplicity and finesse, circumvention dishonesty and fraud; instead of ingenuousness, honesty and probity, benevolence, charity and kindness.

Thus it comes to pass; that individuals and families, neighborhoods and communinities, States and nations, are too often involved, in mutual jealousies and disagreements; animosities and contentions; and inflict injuries, and commit depredations, on each others' rights.

To portray all the evils, that have resulted, and that are now resulting, from the want of peace and good will amongst men; would present the human character in such a point of view, that seriously to reflect on it, would, it should seem, awaken very solemn, awful, and tender sensations, in the bosoms, even of the most unprincipled and abandoned.

What adds to the melancholy aspect of the picture is, that many who profess to be actuated by the principles of religion, and by the feelings of peace and good will; both feel and act, contrary to their profession; and thus exhibit evidence, that they are lovers of discord, more than of peace; the promoters, not so much of good will and of friendly affection, as of ill will and strife, of violence and confusion.

Hence we are left to the reflection; that not only they who are indifferent to religion, and they who are either secretly or openly opposed to it; but many who pretend to embrace it; to make it their rule of life; to be peaceably disposed; and to possess and exercise good will and love, towards their brethren; are guilty of wars, and of civil dissensions; of dissimulation and avarice; of cruelty and oppression; and of every species of sin and crime; wickedness and iniquity.

But, glory to God: For bad as the children of men are; there are, notwithstanding, amongst them, many who are truly religious; who follow after peace; who are affected with kindness, good will and love;

and who, by their influence and example, restrain, to a considerable extent, many others, from what is wrong and unjust, vicious and unrighteous.

We should therefore further consider; that however bad the world may be; it would be infinitely worse; and would experience much more violence and confusion, suffering and distress, than it now experiences; were there not found in it, many who are really peaceable and religious; who are filled with the spirit of good will; and who labor to promote amongst others, piety and virtue, goodness and morality.

We ought still further to reflect; that whoever is disposed to peace and good will; or to anything else of a moral and religious nature; is thereto inclined, through the influence of the Divine Grace, which is given through the incarnation and the death of Christ; and which, so far as it influences an individual to morality and virtue; thus far produces in such individual, the true religion.

Glory and honor, are therefore due to the Father, for sending Christ, to become incarnate, and to be the author of this religion;

and to Christ, for condescending to be sent, and for becoming such an author;—and to the Holy Ghost, for imparting a spiritual knowledge of this religion, to all such, as are willing, to be therein instructed.

Fourthly.—There is now, as there ever has been, and as there ever will be, but one true religion in the world. This religion, though derived, through the incarnation and the death of Christ, has been embraced by the truly good, in every age; as well under the Patriarchal and Jewish Economies, as the Christian Dispensation. For the incarnation and the death of Christ, have, ever, and rightly, been considered, as having virtually, though not literally, occurred, as soon as our First parents had transgressed; nay; before they, or the world, had been created, or made.

They, who, in an intelligent and saving manner, received the religion in question, before the advent of Christ, looked forward to him, and had faith in him, as yet to come.—They, who, in like manner, and since the advent of Christ, have received this religion, have looked back to him, and had faith in him as having come, and as having executed his Earthly mission.

And, although, there have been, in the world, comparatively but few, that have intelligently, "with full purpose of heart," and in a saving manner, embraced this religion; yet the announcement in the text, of peace and good will amongst men on the Earth; whether we consider the announcement as declarative of what had already been; or as Prophetical of what should be in future time; has been verified, fulfilled, in those few, who have faithfully served God, and exerted a virtuous, a wholesome and religious influence upon others.

But glory to God: The time is coming, when this announcement, this angelic declaration, shall be verified, fulfilled, to an unlimited extent. When the people of every country, and of all nations, shall be savingly converted to the true religion. When every human being shall be filled with the spirit of peace, and good will, charity and benevolence. When "all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest." When "the knowledge of God, shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea." When "Satan shall be bound," and

not be permitted to interrupt the peace, the good will and harmony, that shall universally prevail.

The Scriptures specify a thousand years, for the continuance of that happy time. It will, indeed, be a glorious Millennium. We would that it were present. Then the Church, of which, Christ, our glorious Redeemer, is the Spiritual head, shall be established in every part of the habitable globe, and "all nations shall flow unto it."

With an eye of faith, in the Divine promises, my Brethren; look forward to that happy time; and see the prosperity and triumph, in which the Church will then be arrayed. See it thronged with the inhabitants of the whole Earth. In the language of the Poet:

"See a long race, its spacious courts adorn;
"See future sons and daughters yet unborn;
"In crowding ranks, on every side arise,
"Demanding life, impatient for the skies.
"See barbarous nations at its gates attend;
"Walk in its light, and in its temples bend."

In consideration of that happy time; that glorious era of the world; we may well exclaim, with Angels, in the language of the text, "Glory to God in the highest."

But taking the Apocalypse, or Revelation of Saint John for our guide, we shall find; that after the expiration of the thousand years, in which, the Church, will be so gloriously prosperous and triumphant, there will be a degeneracy of many, who will oppose and assail the Church, which in Apocalyptical language, is called "The Holy City;" but who will be overcome: Will be consumed and destroyed, by fire coming down from Heaven; so that the Church will continue to be flourishing and renovated, if not in its millennial glory and splendor, yet in much prosperity, to the end of the world, when time shall be no longer.

Then, the bodies of the dead, will be reorganized, and revived into life again; and be re-possessed by the souls, that had been, by the process of death, separated from them; and will be so changed and modified, as to be bodies that will be spiritual; and not, as before death, bodies that were natural. The last generations of men on the Earth;—the generations that will be living without having died, when the bodies of the dead shall be raised, at the end of the world; will, likewise be so changed, that *their bodies,* will also be spiritual.

Then Christ, in great glory, and attended by Angels, will re-appear: Will come again: And all shall behold his Second advent. And he will judge the whole human race; and will transfer to Heaven, those who have here lived rightly and religiously; and have been guided by the spirit of peace and good will: But he will dispose of the irreligious and wicked, according to the declaration of a Prophet, who says: "The wicked shall be turned into hell; and all they that forget God."

The righteous, having been admitted into Heaven, will there be partakers of its endless enjoyments. Happiness, which is pure, and perfect, and unalloyed, and endless, will be their Inheritance.

May we, my hearers, so live, and so die; that we may be accounted worthy to be sharers, in that Heavenly Inheritance of happiness. Amen.

SERMON XVII.

A SERMON FOR EPIPHANY.

Saint Mathew ii. 1.

"THERE CAME WISE MEN FROM THE EAST, TO JERUSALEM."

THE object of these wise men, as we learn from the context, was, to seek for Jesus, the Infant Saviour: To honor him with gifts: And to worship him.

They were Heathen philosophers, of more than ordinary learning and ability, for the time in which they lived. They were also good men; since they believed in the Saviour, and offered him their worship.

Whence they came, is unknown; since in their time, men of their character, inhabited several countries of the East.

It is probable, however, that they came from Arabia, since the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, which they presented to

him, were productions, which Arabia afforded in abundance.

They had probably read in the Jewish Scriptures, that the Saviour would appear in the world. They must, at least, have heard the report of his coming, a report, which, originating in those Scriptures; had spread through several Eastern nations.

God had also given them a special intimation of the Saviour's birth, by causing them to see a luminous appearance called "a Star," which, perhaps, was the Glorious "Shechinah," or "Light," representing the Spiritual presence of the Saviour, who is the Second Person in the Trinity.

This Star, was Divinely sent before them, to guide them to the place, where the Saviour was to be found.

But, an important consideration suggested by the text, is, that Heathen men, entered on a lengthy journey, to worship him acceptably; thus intimating, that salvation through him, was not confined to the Jews, but extended also to the Gentiles.

The Jews, though God's chosen people, had, through their Fabled traditions, and the licentiousness of their lives, rendered

themselves incapable of rightly understanding the Divine Oracles, which He had especially entrusted to their keeping.

They read in those Oracles, of a promised Saviour, who was to be their Ruler. But, they were so little qualified for understanding Spiritual truth, that they supposed that he would come as their temporal King, to exalt them as a nation.

They never expected him as a Spiritual King. Much less did they think that the Gentiles could be admitted to his Kingdom. They viewed themselves as being so peculiarly the favorites of God, that He would bestow on them exclusively His favor.

Thus a few individuals in a Heathen country, had a better understanding of the Jewish Scriptures, in relation to the Saviour, than the generality of the Jews themselves: And being guided by a star, sought out the place where he was, and worshiped him.

There were, indeed, some, among the Jews, who believed in his Divinity and worshiped him, even in his infancy; as for instance, his mother Mary, and her husband Joseph: Also Simeon and Anna. Zacharias, and Elizabeth; and the shepherds, to whom

the glad tidings of his birth were declared by an Angel.

But, the great body of the Jews and Gentiles, were unwilling to acknowledge him as their Saviour, and their Spiritual King.

Nor were mankind any better prepared to receive him afterwards, when he commenced his Public Ministry, "preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God."

A few, became his Disciples; but men, for the most part, rejected him.

So it has ever since been. But a few, comparatively speaking, have believed in him, and been obedient to his Gospel.

Even at the present day, a small part only of the world, professes to be Christian: And among those who thus profess, there are too many that are Christians only in the name.

Christianity, the religion of our Saviour; to convert to itself even this small part of the human family, has ever been obliged to contend with every species of opposition.

In proof of this, we have only to advert to the reproaches, the sufferings and the death, brought upon its adherents, by Jewish, by Pagan, and by Papal malevolence;

and to the reproaches, the heresies and schisms, which the Church of Christ, has ever, even to the present moment, in our own, as well as in other countries denominated Christian, been destined to oppose.

Christ, therefore, "came to his own," who, in a primary sense, were the Jews; but in a secondary sense to the Heathen; and "his own," with too few exceptions, have "received him not."

But, as a few Israelitish shepherds, confessed and worshiped him, as soon as the announcement of his birth had been made to them: And as a few "wise men," from a Gentile country in the East, also visited and worshiped him, as soon as a star had proclaimed his nativity: And as his worshipers have ever since continued gradually to increase in number, in spite of opposition; so we anticipate the time as approaching, when the whole world will be converted to his religion, and he will be the spiritual King of mankind, individually, and collectively.

He, as the Scriptures positively declare, has become the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He has made an atone-

ment for the hereditary sinfulness, and for the actual transgression of all.

But faith in his Divinity; repentance for sin; and righteousness of life; are the terms, on which the propitiation and atonement, can be made effectual for the salvation and the happiness of men. To those, therefore, who refuse a compliance with these terms, the atonement, with respect to future happiness, is unavailing.

This atonement, was literally made, by his death upon the cross: But it was virtually made before the existence of any of our race, or the formation of the earth. He is therefore, in Scripture, said to be, "a lamb slain from," that is, before "the foundation of the world."

The same repentance, righteousness and faith, that under the economy of Christianity, are required for obtaining the benefits, of the atonement, were also required for obtaining the same benefits, under the Patriarchal, and Jewish Dispensations.—We say the same faith; for, according to the Scripture, there is no other name than that of Christ; there never has been; neither will there ever be, any other given amongst men, whereby they can be saved.

This is the faith, which occasioned Job to say; "I know that my Redeemer liveth:" And Saint Paul to declare; that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." It is that by which Moses was enabled to "esteem the reproaches of Christ, as greater treasures than the riches of Egypt:" And to which Saint John alludes, as enabling Christians to "overcome the world." It is the faith, by which holy men, both before, and since the nativity of Christ, have been able to prefer suffering and disgrace, to the renunciation of the true religion.

When our Saviour said to his disciples; "except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven;" it should seem, that he intended to represent children, if not as having personal faith and repentance, of which they are supposed to be incapable, yet, as being, at the least, comparatively good, in consequence of Divine Grace bestowed on them, through the merits of his death.

It should seem, that he intended to inculcate the doctrine, that children, although

their disposition and their actions, are, to some extent, sinful; have no voluntary sin; inasmuch as they are not moral agents: That all their sin, is that which is hereditary; which has been communicated to them, through their ancestors; and for which, there has been, by his death, a full, sufficient, and complete atonement.

It should seem, that he intended, therefore, to teach; that children, in the sight of God, are placed on the footing of those, who in mature age, repent; perform good works; and have faith: that children, are consequently, qualified for Heaven: That happiness in future, will be their portion.

And why is not this happiness attainable by such of the Gentiles, or Heathen, as are pious, virtuous and religious? Such as repent, and become holy in their hearts, and in the conduct of their lives? And have some degree of the right faith, inasmuch as they believe in God, and inasmuch as Christ is God Himself?

They indeed know not that Christ has become Incarnate, and has died. Hence it is, that in his death as an atonement, they neither have nor are required to have, that

full and unwavering faith which others who are privileged with the written Gospel, are commanded to possess.

God has informed us, that the Rule by which he will judge the world is, that He will require men to render Him an account, in proportion to their privileges and ability in the present life.

Hence, the Jews, who were in possession of the Oracles of the Old Testament, and were therefore more able than the Heathen to have a correct knowledge of Christ's character and Spiritual Kingdom, were consequently bound to have a greater and more enlightened faith in his name; and to discharge more thoroughly and perfectly the obligations of human duty.

Were it otherwise: Were the Heathen obliged to improve their *one* talent of knowledge and ability, to as great an amount, as the Jews were obliged to improve their *five;* our notions of justice would be confounded. The Parable of the talents would seem for no other purpose than to mystify the truth; and it would be difficult to ascertain the meaning of the Scripture which informs us, that men, in order to be

happy, must perform their duty according to their knowledge of it,—according to their ability to obtain this knowledge; and therefore according to their power to perform such duty. God bestows upon Christians *ten* talents of Spiritual knowledge. He reveals to them more fully than to others, the plan of salvation; a knowledge of himself; and the duty which He requires of man.

He instructs them, not only by reason, and the Oracles of the Old Testament, but also by the Gospel, as in the New Testament, recorded.

They are therefore responsible for more faith, more spiritual improvement, than was ever required of the Heathen, or even of the Jews.

They know full well that they are sinful, exposed for their sin to the wrath of God, and unable to escape from punishment, except by the aid of Divine Grace bestowed through the merits of the death of Christ.

They know that Christ has suffered in his humanity; his Divinity making that suffering effectual, through Divine Grace, for their salvation and their Everlasting happiness, on condition, and only on condi-

tion, that according to the requirements of the Gospel, they obey God, by having in their hearts, holiness and faith; and in their conduct, righteousness and goodness.

They constitute the Christian Church, which is a continuance of the Patriarchal and Jewish churches, under a new Dispensation.

Christ is their spiritual king. He is equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost: And these Three are One God, to whom obedience and worship should be rendered.

They who are truly Christians, will worship God, and submit to the requirements of the Gospel. They will not be induced to neglect the performance of what they know to be their duty.

They will endeavor to improve in goodness; to grow in grace; — by the study of the Scripture: By Private, and by Public prayer: By attending to the worship and the service of the Church; by receiving properly its sacraments; by adhering to its ministry, and ordinances: And they will discharge the duty of instructing rightly and religiously their children: Of bringing them up, "in the nurture and admonition

of the Lord." They will use their exertions, their endeavors, for the benefit not only of themselves, and their households, but of others.

And now let us seriously inquire; whether we are possessed of the Christian graces. Whether we can lay claim, rightly and justly to the Christian character. Whether we are really and truly Christians; having the faith, and performing the works of God's people; the Saviour's servants.

If so, we shall be as anxious to enjoy in our hearts, the Holy Spirit, the spiritual presence of the Saviour, who is "God manifest in the flesh," as "the wise men of the East" were, to behold him visibly and personally, in Bethlehem.

As a "star" was Divinely sent, to guide and direct them to the place where he was on the Earth; so the Scripture is Divinely sent to lead and to guide us to his Holier and Higher place, in Heaven.

As that Star, represented his unseen and Holy Spirit; the Spirit of the Father; the Holy Ghost; even God Himself; so also, the Bible represents the same unseen and Eternal Spirit.

As this Holy Spirit, operating on the hearts of the "Wise men," caused them to follow the leading of that Star; so may the same Spirit, working within our hearts and minds, influence and incline us to follow and obey the teaching of the Bible.

As the wise men presented to the Saviour Earthly gifts, and thereby honored and acknowledged him as the Lord of the Earth and the Universe; so let us, in like manner, honor and acknowledge him, by contributing of our Earthly substance for the support of his Gospel; the worship of his name; and the building up of his spiritual kingdom amongst men.

As the wise men rejoiced in the Saviour and worshiped him; so let us rejoice in him. Let us worship and adore him, as we worship and adore the Father and the Holy Ghost: And may we be saved in a world without end. Amen.

SERMON XVIII.

A SERMON FOR ASH-WEDNESDAY.

First Corinthians xv. 31.

"I PROTEST, BY YOUR REJOICING, WHICH I HAVE IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD, I DIE DAILY."

THE object of the apostle, in this text of Scripture, evidently was, to declare, that as death separates men from the present life, and from Earthly enjoyments; so he, by weaning his affections from such enjoyments, and from life itself; experienced, daily and continually, that which resembles death.

That what he said was true, he protested by the rejoicing of the Corinthians; a rejoicing in which he participated; which he had in common with them; which was because he and they had become Christians; and which, therefore, might be truly said, to be

in Christ; inasmuch as Christ is the author and bestower of Christianity.

He thus exhibited himself as an example which should be imitated, when he said, when he solemnly protested, that he died daily; and thereby intended to assert, not that he literally died, by a separation of his soul from his body; a separation, in which death essentially consists; but, that by weaning his affections from the world, and the things that are in the world; from life; and the enjoyments, the pleasures, and the vanities attending it; he experienced, he felt, within himself, a change representative of death; a change, which may indeed be termed death in a figurative sense: A change which implied, that he was continually "dying unto sin; and living unto righteousness:" A change which afforded proof, that he was qualified to do his duty here; and to be a recipient of happiness hereafter.

Since, then, we ought to take the apostle for an example; and to imitate him, by dying "daily;" in other words, by weaning our affections from the world;—We proceed to consider more particularly;

What it is, thus to imitate him: And, to consider; the encouragement which we have for so doing.

To imitate the apostle, by weaning our affections from the world;—by dying unto sin, and by living unto righteousness; we must really and truly, both love and practice virtue, piety, and goodness: And we must positively dislike; we must hate, and renounce, what is vicious, unrighteous and iniquitous.

True it is, that our natural disposition is corrupt;—in other words; that our affections, our desires, are naturally sinful, inclined to what is evil, and opposed to what is good. How, then, is this disposition; how are these desires to be changed, in such a manner, that we may be enabled to love; and to practice, goodness? And to hate, and avoid wickedness?

The Scripture, as every one who rightly reads, and correctly understands it may discover; informs us; that through the merits of Christ's death and suffering; the assistance; the Grace of God, is imparted to us. That we as free, or moral agents, are thereby enabled so to overcome our

corrupt nature; our evil disposition; as to change it from sinfulness to goodness: So to subdue our vicious passions, or affections, as to cleanse them from unrighteousness, and to make them holy: And so to reform ourselves, as to be practically good.

It is then, by accepting and improving Divine Grace, which is bestowed upon us, through Christ, that we are able to purify ourselves; and by this means, to love and follow what is righteous, good and right; and to hate and forsake unrighteousness, wickedness, and vice.

We are not, however, instructed by the Scripture, that we are able, by Divine Grace, in the present life, to overcome wholly, absolutely, and entirely, our depravity; and to be completely, perfectly, and fully, righteous and upright.

Our love for goodness, however much we may endeavor to improve it, will, therefore be sullied with some impurity. Our hatred to vice, will ever continue to be mixed, with some remaining fondness for what is sinful: And our actions, will always exhibit more or less of our degeneracy and frailty.

Hence it is, that as Christians; as indi-

viduals that have accepted the Divine Grace; as persons whose nature and affections have been transformed from a state of sin, to a state of goodness, we are represented in the Scripture, as being yet imperfect; and as being soldiers, whose business whilst we live, will be, to have a warfare with our sins, which are our worst enemies, and which we must endeavor, to the utmost of our ability to conquer and to destroy.

As the Israelites conquered Canaan; as by virtue of the conquest, God permitted them to inhabit that country, and to flourish in it; although they there left unsubdued some of the Canaanitish tribes, which they were commanded to subdue and destroy utterly; so the Christian conquers his depraved nature, his wicked heart, by overcoming its evil propensities, and causing it to be holy; and is Divinely permitted to possess it in its conquered, its converted, or righteous state; and to be accounted as a virtuous and good person in the sight of God; whilst, through human frailty, he leaves, as he is obliged to leave, in his nature, some remains of its evil desires, propensities, or affections.

He finds, that the difference between his sinful or unconverted, and his good, his converted, or righteous state is this:—That the former state is that, in which his wickedness prevailed over all the goodness, to which Divine Grace was endeavoring to prompt him; and with which, this Grace, in some degree, inspired him: That the latter state, is that, in which his goodness, by the same Divine Grace, is predominant; whilst, at the same time, he is not wholly divested of desires, and practices, which are evil.

Indeed Christians, even the best of them, should consider; not, that they have, attained; or that they can, attain; to absolute perfection; to a state which is wholly sinless, in the present life: But, that they ought to labor assiduously, to come as near as possible to such a state.

Hence, they should make continual opposition to those remains of indwelling corruption, that are in their hearts; and to those evil practices and habits, to which they are addicted, or which, they are liable to adopt.

Thus, they should not only maintain the

goodness that they have acquired, but they should progress in goodness; and grow better and better; more and more perfect, whilst they live. In no other way, can they "die unto sin." In no other way, can they "live unto righteousness." In no other way, can they religiously rejoice. In no other way, can they prevent themselves from relapsing into that natural or unconverted state, from which they have been delivered.

To die unto sin, is to repent of it. To relax our anxiety for temporal enjoyments. To weaken our desire for Earthly things. To wean our affections from the pleasures afforded by time and sense. To loose our hold upon the world. In short: To diminish our attachments to life, and to things of an Earthly and worldly nature: And thus to experience what is similar to natural death, which will sever us from these things; and from that life; and dissipate such attachments. And we should not only, in this manner, die unto sin; but in imitation of the great apostle to the Gentiles, we should thus die "daily;" that is continually.

The declaration of that Apostle, that he

so died "daily," is proof, that although he was pre-eminent as a Saint, he had, notwithstanding, wrong desires, sins, and temptations, to encounter, and to overcome; and is a solemn warning to us all, that we also, have temptations, evil propensities, sins, and vices, to subdue, and to keep in subjection.

To live unto righteousness, is to increase our anxiety to be righteous. To strengthen our desire for Heavenly joys. To place our affections more and more, "on things above." To make our attachment to virtue and to holiness, continually stronger. To make constant and due improvement in religion; in our love and practice of what is good. To "grow in grace;" and in the hope and assurance of a blessed immortality. In short: To be more and more obedient to the Divine commands: Conformed to the Divine will: Resigned to the Dispensations of Divine Providence: Holy in our hearts, and righteous in our lives: That in this world, we may have spiritual comfort and consolation, as a foretaste of Heaven; and in the world to come, may have the spiritual peace, and joy, and honor, and

happiness, and glory, which, in Heaven, are reserved for those who here die unto sin; and "live soberly, righteously, and Godly."

We should not only live in this manner at the present time; but we should continue so to live, whilst life shall be prolonged. Saint Paul thus lived. Hence, he spake of "pressing towards the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." That is, of increasing, of improving, perseveringly, and constantly, in religion; and of thereby making more and more sure, salvation and happiness, in future.

It is, at all times our duty to repent of sin, and to be humble. To loose our hold upon the world; upon things of a temporal nature; that we may live the more soberly and Godly. Yet, it is highly proper to appoint, as the Church has appointed, special times, for a strict and special performance of this duty, which, otherwise, might be oftener forgotten, neglected, or imperfectly performed. And what time is better calculated to impress upon our minds the propriety and necessity of attending to the duty in question, than the time, the season of Lent? Which season for the

present year, this day commences; and which, by directing; by leading us; to reflect, on Christ's death and suffering, and the Divine Grace, that we thereby receive, for enabling us "to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness;" is intended particularly to admonish and persuade us, thus to die "daily;" and thus to live constantly.

Then let us, during this season, and at all times, endeavor to wean our affections from the world: To loose the ties which bind us to Earthly and perishable objects: To moderate our desires for temporal enjoyments: And especially to suppress all ambitious, covetous, and other sinful feelings: To humble ourselves before God, by repentance, by prayer, by such a manner, and in such degree, of abstinence from Earthly enjoyments, as conscience shall direct; and by other tokens of humility: And then to commit ourselves, and all that we possess, to God's Providential care; that we may verily "die unto sin, and live unto righteousness."

The encouragement, which we have, thus to die; and thus to live; is, that we may be blessed with Spiritual blessings, in time

and Eternity: And like Saint Paul, and his brethren at Corinth, be able to rejoice in Christ Jesus Our Lord, for such inestimable blessings.

Had Christ not suffered; had he not died; Divine Grace, would be withheld from us; and we should therefore be deprived of every temporal and spiritual comfort in the present life; and of happiness, and of every spiritual favor in the future world. Nothing but continued and unremitted sorrow, pain and woe, would be our portion, here, and hereafter.

But, by Divine Grace bestowed through the merits of his death, we receive many temporal enjoyments in this world; whether we remain in a natural and unconverted state; or be delivered from that state, "by dying unto sin."

A better relish, however, is given to these enjoyments, and they afford us more satisfaction, when our nature is changed by Grace, and we have practically embraced Christianity.

When our nature is thus changed; when religion is sincerely embraced by us; then, and not till then, are we the recipients, of

those spiritual blessings, which prove that we are in the way to Heaven. Then, and not till then, are we entitled to the happiness, the honors and the glories, of the future world.

But, by relaxing our efforts to be good and holy; our spiritual blessings in this life; and our title to future happiness; to Heavenly enjoyments; may be lost, after having been received.

Surely, therefore, we should be stimulated to seek and obtain religion; by a spiritual change in our affections, and our conduct: And not only to obtain it, but to persevere in it, lest we lose it, and consequently lose a Heavenly Inheritance.

To persevere in Religion, implies, that we make in it, due and constant improvement; by progressing in virtue, and goodness; by perfecting more and more in our hearts and our lives, the Christian graces; and by thus living more and more in obedience to God's commands.

To perform our duty aright, as God requires us to perform it: To die "daily unto sin, like the Apostle Paul: And to live unto righteousness, we ought to live; we must thus persevere.

We must, in this manner, put our measure, our talent, of Grace and of spiritual privileges to usury. We must thus improve them, during our probation, our present state of trial: Otherwise, we shall be accused as being "slothful," and therefore, as "wicked" servants; and meet with a condemnatory sentence, when, at the great day of account, we shall stand at the tribunal of him who is "Judge, of Quick and Dead."

As we value our peace and happiness in the present world: As we would be sharers in the happiness of the world to come: As we would have eventually, a dwelling place in Heaven:—As, on the other hand, we would avoid spiritual condemnation, and fearful forebodings for ourselves, in time: As we would escape from interminable woe in Eternity: Let us be, unwearied in our efforts, unremitting in our exertions; to abstain from vice; to avoid sin; to be good and righteous; to do our duty;—in a word, to be Christians.

[illegible]d has placed our destiny in our own [illegible] As we shall perform, or neglect [illegible]ty here; He will give to us, or with-

hold from us, the blessings, the good things, which He has prepared in the Heavenly mansions, for the righteous.

He will not force upon us these blessings, if, by persisting in wickedness, we refuse them: Nor, will He withhold them from us, if we strive to obtain them, by the performance of our duty, in obedience to His laws.

Let us therefore religiously and devotedly, endeavor to discharge our duty. Let us die daily unto sin: Let us live unto righteousness: That, like the apostle and his Corinthian Brethren, we may be able to rejoice, with a spiritual joy: That we may be entitled to a Heavenly Inheritance: And may God, in His mercy, through Christ, give us the fruition of such Inheritance, in a world without end. Amen.

SERMON XIX.

A LENTEN SERMON.

2 Chronicles xx. 3.

"And Jehoshaphat feared; and set himself to seek the Lord; and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah."

The Scriptural Biography of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, represents him as being a wise and good King; nevertheless, as being guilty of certain deviations from the path of duty.

A notorious instance of his being thus guilty, was a confederacy which he made with Ahab, a wicked and Idolatrous King of Israel.

In consequence of this confederacy, these two Kings, made war upon Ramoth Gilead, and were defeated; Ahab being slain by the enemy, and Jehoshaphat escaping from the same fate, because when he saw that he

was overcome in battle, he became sensible of his sin, in uniting with Ahab; and made acknowledgment of his fault; prayed to God for assistance; and trusted in Divine mercy for deliverance.

In a short time afterwards, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Inhabitants of Mount Seir, invaded his kingdom, and took possession of Engeddi. They had heard of his defeat at Ramoth Gilead, and of the Divine displeasure towards him for his alliance with the King of Israel. Hence, they thought him less formidable than they had previously considered him; and they intended to subject him, and his people, to their power.

To avert the calamity, with which he was threatened; "He set himself to seek the Lord."

We may well suppose, that he made military preparations against his enemies. But his chief preparation was, in the proclamation of a "Fast"; and in gathering his people together, to ask for the help of God.

The consequence was, that he prevailed against his enemies: That they were smitten: That they destroyed one another.

It thus appears from his history; that at Ramoth Gilead, his life was saved through his prayer to God, and his trust in the Divine protection. That before the wilderness of Jeruel, at, or near, Engeddi, he and his people, through prayer and fasting, and the acknowledgment of their sins, became victorious over an enemy, by which their country was invaded.

We, too, have difficulties and dangers to encounter: And it becomes us to imitate the example of Jehoshaphat, and the children of Judah. To humble ourselves for our sins. To fast, and to pray. To put our trust and confidence in God; and implore His aid to sustain and defend us in our present probationary state.

As individuals, we are exposed to misfortunes in our temporal affairs: To temptations and injuries in our spiritual concerns: To mental and bodily afflictions: To bereavements and to sudden death.

As a nation, we are exposed to injury, not only from such laws as are bad in themselves; but from a wrong interpretation, and [illegible] wrong execution of such as are in [illegible]es good: From fraud and mis-

management in our Public business: From civil dissension and from war. From the emnity of other nations: And from calamities which are Providential.

As belonging to the Church, we are liable to be harassed by unworthy members, and their real and pretended friends: And by those who are in secret, and in open hostility to the Church; to its ministry and worship, to its doctrines and sacraments.

But to whatever dangers, we are individually, or collectively, exposed: With whatever trials and adversities we are afflicted: We should remember, that for our sin we are deserving of them all: And that we ought by fasting and by prayer; and by obedience to the Divine commands, to propitiate the favor of Almighty God; that He may "turn from us all those evils that we most justly have deserved."

A connection had been formed between the families of Jehoshaphat and Ahab; for the son of the former, had been married to the daughter of the latter.

Without doubt this connection was an inducement to Jehoshaphat, to go from Jerusalem, on a visit to Ahab, at Samaria.

His visit afforded Ahab an opportunity to entertain him with a splendid feast: To caress and to flatter him: And finally, to persuade him to unite the army of Judah, with the army of Israel, in an unholy war against Ramoth Gilead. This war, was disastrous and disgraceful to Jehoshaphat. It also led him into another war, with the children of Moab and of Ammon, and their allies.

Thus his family connection with the Idolatrous House of Ahab, caused him to commit other sins, which, eventually, involved him in adversity and trouble.

As it was with him, so is it, too frequently with us. One act of our sinful intimacy with the wicked, produces another, until we find ourselves encompassed with many difficulties and dangers.

We should therefore like Jehoshaphat and the children of Judah, when they were assembled at the fast, proclaimed by that King, have a realizing sense of our sins, and endeavor to avert the calamities which flow from such sins; and should endeavor to ma[illegible] peace with God, by humbling [illegible]efore Him; by prayer; and by

fasting; and by a reformation of our conduct.

Have we, in any respect "followed the multitude, to do evil?" Have we participated in the pride, the ambition, or the avarice of the world? In mendacious words, intemperance, or slander? In any act of oppression, or any unhallowed intrigues for power or for Popular applause? In harshness or severity to our enemies? In any unkindness to friends, relatives, or neighbors? In luxury, extravagance, or vain amusements? In any neglect of the service, the worship, or the sacraments of the Church? In contempt for its Ministry, or any of its ordinances? In short; have we been the associates of sinners, by any species of sin, immorality, or vice? If so, we have reason like Jehoshaphat to fear: Like him to set ourselves to seek the Lord: Like him, and the children of Judah to fast and to pray; to humble ourselves before God; to purify our hearts and to reform our lives.

Do we acknowledge the necessity of prayer, of humility and repentance; of purity of heart, and of conduct; and at the same time, doubt the propriety of fasting?

We should remember that God commanded the Israelites to keep a Public fast, on the tenth day of the seventh month. That in addition to this, the Jews had Public and Annual fasts, on the fourth, the fifth, the seventh, and the tenth months. That among the Israelites and their posterity the Jews, there were many pious persons, as for instance, Moses and Elijah; David and Daniel, and others, who had Private fastings, or such as each individual prescribed for himself. That our Saviour fasted, and thereby set an example, which, without doubt, he intended that Christians should imitate. That he sanctioned the practice of fasting, by saying to his disciples; "when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance." Likewise, that the apostles fasted: For, says the Sacred historian concerning Paul and Barnabas; "when they had ordained them Elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed;" and Paul himself speaks of his own distresses, imprisonments, and fastings. Finally; that fasting was practiced by Christians in [illegible]postolic age, and in the ages immedi-

ately succeeding it. In a word; that it has obtained in the Christian Church from its first establishment, to the present time.

Nor should the benefits of fasting be questioned, when we reflect, that it was a means of causing the evils which God had denounced against Ahab, to be deferred; and the destruction of the Ninevites to be averted: and that our Saviour had recourse to it, when he cast evil spirits out of men.

Fasting, may therefore be considered as one of the good works, which we are bound to perform. Says an apostle; "we are created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath ordained, that we should walk in them."

He intends not to teach us, that we can merit salvation by our works: For he says, in another place, "by Grace are ye saved, through faith."

He means to instruct us; that good works are the fruits, and evidence of faith, and the necessary proof, of possessing Grace, sufficiently to be saved; of being obedient to God, and justified before Him.

Therefore, to fast, under the impression, that by fasting, and other good works, we

can purchase, or deserve the enjoyment of Heaven, would be vain. It would seem to deny that the grace of God, through the merits of Christ's death, is the cause of salvation. It would be like the fasting of the Pharisee, who boasted, that he practiced it twice a week; that he was not like other men; and seemed by his boasting to suppose himself to be worthy of happiness, independently of Divine Grace. God declares, by the Prophet Isaiah, that He abhors and hates such fasting.

Fasting should therefore be practiced from the right motives. From pure and upright intentions of the heart. From a sincere desire to please God: To be submissive to His will: To be obedient to His law.

Hence, it should consist, not only in occasional abstinence from food; but, in heart felt repentance for sin: In praying for the Divine forgiveness and assistance: And, in pure and sincere desires, and firm resolutions, to be righteous, in the future.

The propriety of fasting at particular times, in preference to other times, is evident from the answer of the Saviour to the question; "why do the disciples of John fast

often, and make prayers;"—"and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees? But thine eat and drink."

Says the Saviour in reply; "can ye make the children of the Bride chamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them: Then shall they fast in those days."

We should also remember what Solomon asserts: That "to every thing there is a season; and a time to every purpose."

The Church has appointed as times of fasting, certain days, which she recommends to be kept, according to the purpose for which they are thus designated from other portions of the year. These days, are easily distinguished from others, since they are specified in our "Book of Common Prayer."

None of them are more important than the "Forty days of Lent," which include the anniversary of the sufferings and the death of our Saviour: and which precede the Annual festival of his glorious resurrection from the dead.

As this season of fasting and humiliation is now present with us, may our outward

behavior correspond with the humiliation and repentance, which we profess to feel, at this period of the year. With humility and penitence, may we call to mind, the sins which caused our Saviour to suffer; to bleed, and to die upon the cross.

May we devote much of our time to self examination: to prayer, and religious exercises. May we duly meditate on the plan of salvation, and the doctrines of the Gospel, and be thankful that we are redeemed through Christ, from sin and Eternal death.

We should, however, as we have said, avoid the error of supposing that we can merit salvation.

God, it is true, bestows salvation, on condition of obedience: Not, however, because that obedience, is meritorious in His sight: But because He, as the Supreme Proprietor, Governor, and Disposer of men, and of all things, is pleased so to do.

"By Grace are ye saved," says an apostle: And we should remember, that temporal and spiritual blessings; and future salvation, are unmerited by us. That they are in- [illegible] God's gifts. That they flow from His [illegible]ce.

To conclude.—Though fasting is a duty; neither Christ nor the Church, has prescribed the measure of it: In other words, the precise extent to which it shall be practiced. Every Christian, therefore, is left very much to the determination of his own conscience, in relation to the extent, the degree, of his fasting; and from what he shall chiefly abstain.

Finally:—May our fasting and our other works, be performed in such a manner, that "we may so pass through things temporal, that we shall not lose the good things which are eternal;" but be blessed with the Everlasting enjoyment of what God has prepared in Heaven for the righteous. Amen.

SERMON XX.

A SERMON FOR GOOD-FRIDAY.

Acts of the Apostles iii. 18.

"But those things, which God before had shewed, by the mouth of all His Prophets; that Christ should suffer; He hath so fulfilled."

These words, are a part of a discourse, addressed by the apostle Peter, to a Jewish assembly, in the temple at Jerusalem.

He had just performed a miracle, by curing the lameness of a person, at the Easternmost gate of the temple; and the assembly, were wondering at the miracle.

In his discourse, he charged upon his hearers, their Rulers, and the Jews generally, the crime of putting Christ to death; and he admonished them to repent of that crime, and of their other sins, that God might forgive them, and save them, not-

withstanding their great and accumulated guilt.

He palliated, in some degree, their guilt, by observing that they had incurred it through ignorance; and in the text, he asserted, that the sufferings of Christ, were according to the predictions of the Prophets; and that God had caused these predictions to be fulfilled.

He intended, however, by no means, to declare, that God, to fulfill these predictions, had excited the Jews to put Christ to death; But, that by His Providence, He had so overruled their voluntary conduct, that they had been the instruments of fulfilling His purpose that Christ should suffer and die, to make an atonement for sin;—a purpose which as we may well believe, God could have accomplished in some other way, had not the Jews been voluntarily the instruments of its accomplishment.

The sufferings of Christ, are therefore, the subject of our text; and we proceed, according to the tenor of this subject, with a few observations: *First:* On his character. *Secondly:* On the nature of what he suffered. And; *Thirdly:* On the reason, or design of his suffering.

First.—The character of Christ, was that of a Personage, who was, at once, Human and Divine. He was possessed of human nature, and the attributes of the Supreme Being. He united in one Person, humanity and Divinity. Various descriptions given of him by Revelation, shew very clearly and conclusively that he was man; whilst the worship, and many of the Titles, Attributes, and Acts, which the Scripture represents as proper to be abscribed to him, prove incontestably, that he was likewise God.

That he was man, is very evident. His body was seen and known to be human: And the Scripture speaking concerning Christians as being called his children says expressly; "forasmuch then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."

He had a human soul. It is affirmed of him, that he "increased in wisdom." This affirmation could have no reference to his body; for wisdom is not a property of a material body, but of the soul, or the spirit of a sentient being. Nor could the affirmation refer to God's Spirit of which Christ

was possessed, and in which consisted his Divinity; for that Spirit was from Eternity infinite in wisdom, in which it could therefore admit of no increase. Nor, lastly; could the affirmation be made of Christ's soul as being that of an Angel; for the soul of Christ was united to his body; and Angels are without bodies; they are purely spirits. The soul of Christ, is consequently to be considered as being human; for none will subject themselves to so much absurdity as to suppose that he was a finite creature, whose proper residence was neither on the Earth, nor in Heaven, but in some distant part of the material creation.

He said of his soul that it was "sorrowful." Hence, he had a soul distinct from his body, and from God's Eternal Spirit; for neither that Spirit, nor a body without a soul, can be susceptible of any sorrow. If his soul were not human, what could be its nature?

Life, is the connection of soul and body. Death, is the loss of this connection. Therefore, the death of Christ, is proof, that he had a body and a soul, which, when this connection ceased, were disunited. But his

soul, as we have already noticed, was neither his Divinity, nor any angelic nature; nor the spirit of any created being from some distant world like our own; and no one will be so impious as to imagine that it consisted in the spirit, the soul, or the life, of any Earthly creature inferior to man. Then in its nature, it was human.

Proofs of the humanity of Christ, may be drawn, from almost every page of the New Testament. But at present, it is unnecessary to advert to them any further.

His Divinity, is also, very clearly and fully taught by the Inspired Writings. We find, that he was often worshiped; as for instance, when he was in a ship, on the sea of Gallilee. He was likewise addressed by the appellation or the name of God, and frequently by that of Lord. After his resurrection, he was especially so addressed by Thomas, one of his disciples. As he received, without objection, that worship, and these appellations which are proper to be ascribed to no one but God alone; he certainly claimed to be God Himself.

The term Lord as applied to the Supreme Being, is of the same import precisely, as

the term Jehovah; and since in the Scripture it is applied to Christ, the evidence is clear, that Christ was the Jehovah, whom the Jews were Divinely commanded to obey and to worship, as the Supreme God, their Creator and benefactor.

Nor are the Divine attributes of Christ to be unnoticed. Omniscience belongs to him; for it is said of him, that "he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." He assumes to himself this attribute, by saying in the Apocalyptical vision; "all the churches shall know that I am he, which searcheth the reins and the hearts."

He declares his omnipresence by saying to his disciples; "lo—I am with you always, even unto the end of the world;" and also by promising, that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I be, in the midst of them."

He asserts his omnipotence by saying himself; "all power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth;" and by declaring God to be the Father, and himself to be the Son, and then by affirming, that "what things soever"—"he"—the Father "doeth"

—" these also doeth the Son likewise:" And also by saying of himself and the father; "I and my father are one."

Eternity is ascribed to him, by the prediction that he "shall be called the Everlasting Father;" and by his own words when he says, "I am the beginning and the ending."

Inasmuch as he possesses these attributes which none but God can possess, his Divinity is manifest.

Many of his acts, were also such, that no being could perform them, except Him who has the power which belongs exclusively to Deity. It is affirmed in Holy Writ, that he is the Divine Word, by which all things were made. Thus he is declared the Creator of the Heavens and the earth; of all things spiritual and material.

God the father if also represented as saying to him; "thy throne O God, is forever and ever;" and further; "thou Lord in the beginning, hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the Heavens, are the workmanship of thy hands." Language like this, recognizes, not only his Infinite power; but his Divine titles: In a word, his Divinity.

We have now mentioned but a few, of the many, Scriptural passages, which may be adduced in proof that the peculiar names, appellations and titles of the Supreme Being, His attributes and acts, and the worship which is due to Him, are properly attributed to Christ. At present it is unnecessary to detail, to any great length these proofs, which may be easily found in abundance, in the Prophetical writings of the Jewish Scriptures, and in the Gospel, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse, of the New Testament.

We shall therefore dismiss this part of our discourse, by observing, that all the attributes and perfections, and the very essence of Deity, are ascribed to Christ, not only by the Prophetical declarations, that "his name shall be called"—"the mighty God:" and also "Emanuel, which, being interpreted is God with us;" but by his own assertion, when he says; "I am the first and the last"—"the Almighty:" That when he says; "all things which the father hath, are mine," he challenges to himself the powers, the rights, the privileges, the honors, the glory, the nature, and the sub-

stance of the Godhead:—And, finally, that if we wonder, how, if he was God, he could become incarnate; be subject unto death; and the dominion of the grave; be under the Divine wrath; stand in need of prayer; increase in wisdom; be persecuted and be sorrowful; acknowledge that the father was greater than himself; and receive power as a gift from the father; our wonder may cease, by reflecting that he was also man: And, that, if we inquire with surprise, how, if he was man, he could discern men's thoughts; be present to the end of time with every assemblage of his worshipers; forgive sins by his own authority; have in his own right absolute power and control over all things; foresee and foretell by his own prescience the death, the resurrection, and ascension of himself, and unfold the future scenes of Eternity; be the Lord and the Judge of the living and the dead; be of one and the same essence with the Father and the Holy Ghost; be the proper object of all worship; be clothed with all the titles and attributes of Deity; and be possessed of universal sovereignty; our surprise may

cease, and our inquiry be satisfied, by considering, that he was likewise God.

Secondly.—We are to consider the nature of his sufferings.—These were so many and so various, that all of them cannot now be particularly enumerated, though some of them may be mentioned. They may be considered as affecting his reputation; his soul; and his body: In other words, his humanity; for his Divinity which is God's Spirit, and which is never susceptible of any injury or pain, was exempt from suffering. Nevertheless, his Divine nature, was so connected with his human nature, that the former, gave to the sufferings of the latter, an Infinite value, efficacy, and merit, by which, an atonement was made for sin; and a way was thereby opened for the salvation and happiness of men.

We pretend not to describe, to explain, or understand, what is beyond all human description, explanation and understanding, the manner in which, the two natures of our Saviour Christ were united: or the kind of support, which was given by his Divine, to his human nature. The latter, however, by its union, its connection with

the former, was able, as the Scripture uniformly represents, to bear, and by its sufferings, to expiate, the sins of a wicked world.

We have said what the Scriptures say: that Christ suffered in his reputation. His enemies maligned him. They falsely and maliciously accused him, not only of being "a glutton and a wine bibber," whilst he partook of necessary food and of wine, with temperance and sobriety; but also of having intercourse, familiarity and concert with Satan, whose evil works and corrupting influence, he came expressly to destroy. They charged him with sedition and rebellion against the Empire, the government and the laws of the Roman people. The charge was malicious and unfounded; for he never interfered with civil government. On the contrary, he taught obedience to Civil Rulers and the laws which they prescribe; and in his own conduct, gave an example of conformity to his own teaching. They even alleged that he was guilty of blasphemy, although his thoughts, his speech and behavior, were always unexceptionable;—and pleasing in the sight

of God. Whilst he was meek, humble and unoffending; whilst he went about doing good; whilst he was a perfect pattern of piety, virtue and religion; whilst he was an example of all that is good and great, he was treated with scorn, with contempt, with mockery and persecution, not only by the common people, but by the Rulers and the Chief Priests of the Jewish nation. Then should his servants, his disciples, his followers, not be surprised or disappointed, if slandered and ill-treated; for if Christ, the Master of the house, has been persecuted and called "Beelzebub," how much more shall they who are of his household, be treated in like manner? But if like him, they patiently and innocently endure persecution and reproach; like him, they will ultimately be delivered from suffering and from death, and ascend to the possession of those enjoyments which will be greater than they can now conceive.

Not only was his character, or reputation villified; but his soul, and his body were subjected to extreme distress. Behold him in the garden, when a little before his crucifixion, his agony was such, that he "sweat,

as it were, great drops of blood." It was then, that the sins of the whole world were laid upon him; and he felt their burden as though they had been his own. Hence, he was then visited with Divine wrath producing in his soul an anguish unutterable and indescribable.

This wrath was increased against him; he felt it in all its weight, when he was fastened to the cross, and was expiring; for then, not only the Divine consolations were withdrawn from his soul, but his body which had been previously apprehended and bound, and blindfolded, buffeted, and smitten and scourged; crowned with a crown of thorns, and otherwise cruelly and contemptuously treated, was transfixed in several of its parts, and thus subjected to sensations the most painful,—and surpassing all description. At length, the scene was closed by the pains and the agonies of his death.

Although he was sinless, yet, as he had espoused the cause of mankind, God inflicted upon him the punishment which they deserved. As he suffered in their stead, he felt the effects of the guilt of sin,

and of the remorse of guilt; the fear, and the dread, and the pain of punishment; in a word; all the curses of God's broken law; and these curses fell upon him in a degree as much greater than they could fall upon a mere man, or sinful individual of the human family, as the sin of all men is greater than the sin of such individual.

Although he was "beloved of God," yet as he was willing to take the place of men, God, through love to our fallen race was willing to accept of him as the substitute, and to punish him accordingly. It was because of the connection of his Divinity with his humanity, that his punishment, though ceasing with his death, was considered as infinite and eternal in its nature, and therefore as a substitution for the punishment which men would otherwise receive. However much we may fail to comprehend the case; yet, such is the doctrine of the Scripture.

Thirdly. — We are to consider the reason, the design, or the object of his suffering. This object has in view, the glory of God, and the salvation of mankind.

It is for God's glory, that His power, His knowledge, and His wisdom, has been so

displayed, as to provide, by the suffering of Christ, an effectual way, whereby He can exercise His mercy, His love and His goodness towards men, in such a manner as to pardon and to save them, although they are transgressors of His law, and at the same time, can maintain His justice and His holiness, and the authority of His law inviolate: Whilst the penalty of that law, is not repealed: And that such is the case, is evident, since Christ as the representative of men, has suffered the penalty or curse of the law, in their stead, and thereby delivered them from that penalty, not only by the consent but by the very plan and design of God Himself. Their deliverance from the penalty in question, is their salvation, which together with God's glory, is the reason, the object, the design, the intent of Christ's suffering.

God in His mercy, designed to save mankind from the unceasing, the unremitted misery, to which, they were subject for their infractions of His law. But according to His justice, He could never save them, except that justice should be first satisfied. Nothing but Christ's suffering,

could ever satisfy it. Consequently, nothing else, could cause God's mercy to be extended to them, and their salvation, thereby to be attainable: — But, when we speak of Christ's suffering as delivering men from the penalty of the law; as procuring their salvation; as satisfying God's Divine justice; as causing His mercy to be exercised towards them; in short; as freeing them from misery, and leading them to happiness, we are considering them as performing the conditions, on which that suffering bestows on them these inestimable benefits: For the suffering of Christ, for the most part, bestows benefits, not absolutely, but conditionally. The conditions are, faith, and repentance, and good works. These conditions constitute what the Scripture terms holiness, and they must be performed, or the suffering of Christ will be in vain: Its benefits will be lost. To him who lives and dies destitute of holiness, it will be in vain that Christ became Incarnate; subjected his humanity to suffering and to death; and rose from the dead: In vain that he is now in Heaven, making intercession, in behalf of men.

Through Christ's suffering, God bestows upon men His Spirit, to teach them their duty, and to influence them to perform it: In other words; to know what it is to be holy, and to have holiness of heart and of life. By His Spirit He teaches them the right use of reason; and the meaning of the Scripture, and enables them to draw proper and instructive lessons from the Dispensations of His Providence; to reflect rightly and correctly on the relations, in which they stand to their fellow men, and to Himself; and to be disposed to live virtuously and religiously. If they are guided by the influence of that Spirit, as they are able by virtue of Christ's suffering to be guided, then that suffering will be availing for their salvation and happiness.—Otherwise it will be unavailing.

Christ was wounded for the transgressions: He was bruised for the iniquities of men. In him they "have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." But if they disbelieve in him; if they disregard the strivings of the Spirit within them; if they fail to repent of their sins, to reform, and to be holy; if they are with-

out faith; if they are without true and genuine love to God and to men; if they neglect their duty; it will be in vain that he was wounded for them; in vain that he was bruised: They will lose the redemption and forgiveness which they have in him. God will not pardon and save them. The curse of the law which Christ sustained for them, will return upon their own heads; and his design, in suffering to save them will not be accomplished.

He died to deliver them from the power of sin and of Satan; to open a way for the communication of the Holy Spirit to the hearts of men; to sanctify them; and to prepare them for Heaven: To free them from the fear and the power of death; to enable them to have spiritual intercourse with God in this world; and a more intimate communion with Him in the next: And, finally, to make mankind both holy and happy, in time and Eternity.

Are we, my hearers, endeavoring to perform our duty in such a manner that we shall be recipients of future happiness? Have we true Christian faith? Have we repentance for our sins? Are we holy in

our nature? Are we practically good in our conduct? If so, we are performing the conditions of salvation. If not so, we are not performing these conditions. Whilst we live, may we perform these conditions; and may God, through the merits of him who suffered and died for us, save us, and make us blessed, in a future and a better world. Amen.

SERMON XXI.

A SERMON FOR EASTER SUNDAY.

Saint John ii. 19.

"DESTROY THIS TEMPLE, AND IN THREE DAYS I WILL RAISE IT UP."

SUCH was the Prophetic declaration of the Saviour to the Jews, relative to his death, which was soon to be occasioned by their wicked hands; and to his resurrection, which in three days, after his crucifixion, was to occur, by the omnipotent power of himself.

Prophetic, indeed, was this declaration of the Saviour, inasmuch as it referred to his death and resurrection, not as depending upon any uncertain contingencies, but as occurrences which were sure to happen.

He by no means declared to the Jews, that, if, they should destroy this temple;—the temple of his body, he would again raise it up: Nor did he command them to destroy

it. But he predicted that they would occasion its destruction; and that he should cause it again to exist.

The expression, "destroy this temple," was therefore, a prediction, the fulfillment of which he knew to be certain; whilst the expression, "and in three days I will raise it up," was a prediction also, which he knew would be also assuredly fulfilled.

However much the Jews might pretend to understand him as speaking of the temple in which they worshiped; the temple built by Solomon; raised from its ruins by Zerubbabel; and repaired by Herod, yet they knew the falsity of their pretension. They knew full well, that he spake of the temple of his body: Of the death that he was about to suffer; and of his subsequent resurrection from the dead.

They knew this, inasmuch as he had repeatedly and Publicly foretold that he should die, and rise again: And they knew it, because they had seen his miracles, which attested that he was the Messiah, who, at the expiration of three score and two Prophetical weeks, according to the prophecy of Daniel, was to be slain: Who, according

to the words of David, was not to be left in the grave to undergo corruption: And who, in various places of their Scriptures, was described as one to be put to death; to rise from the dead; and to be exalted to Heaven, as having coequality with God.

"Destroy this temple," said the Saviour, "and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews sufficiently understood his meaning, which, was, that his life would be taken and restored: Taken by men;—by themselves: But restored by the power of God; the power that resided in himself.

His predictions, in these respects, were subsequently verified; so that the Jews saw, not only the reality of his miracles, but the truth of his prophecies. Thus, in token of his Divinity, he gave them not only a sign as they had demanded, but a multiplicity of signs, consisting in Prophetic truths, and Miraculous performances.

By foretelling events which were to come; as for instance, his suffering and dying; his rising and ascending; and the destruction of Jerusalem; he proved incontestably, that his knowledge was Prophetic: And by acts which were supernatural, as the restoration

of sight to the blind; of health to the diseased; of sanity to demoniacs;—and of life to the dead, as in the cases of Lazarus and Himself; he as clearly evinced, that his power was Miraculous.

His prophetic knowledge and miraculous power, were both very strikingly exhibited by his own resurrection: For that resurrection was an event, which through his infinite prescience, he had foretold; and which, by his omnipotence, he afterwards accomplished.

The power, by which miracles are wrought, is not, when exerted by him, to be considered in the same point of view, as when exercised by men. In him it is original; a property of his nature. In them, it is secondary, flowing from him through them, that they may be instruments for accomplishing his Providential purposes.

The same may be said in relation to the knowledge by which prophecies are uttered. It is originally and continually in him: It pertains to his omniscience. It is secondarily and derivatively in men, whenever he endows them with so excellent a gift.

Indeed, whatever knowledge or power

men may possess, it is not their own. It is his; for he is the source whence it flows; and he can impart it, or withhold it, at his pleasure.

He created mankind. He sustains them. "In him" they "live and move and have" their "being;" so that all that they are, and all that they possess are his;—their life, their existence, their bodies, their souls, their enjoyments, their knowledge and their power, their temporal and their spiritual interests.

When he said of his deceased body, "I will raise it up," he represented himself as having omnipotent power; for without such power the impossibility of bringing a dead body to life, is evident.—By declaring his power to be omnipotent, he proclaimed that he was God; for omnipotent power is an attribute of God, and of Him alone.

Hence, not only his prophetic knowledge and miraculous power, but his omnipotence, and consequently his Divinity are taught in the text. Indeed, all parts of the Scriptures, conspire to teach his Divinity, which, when he was crucified, was also very solemnly declared by the evidence of na-

ture: By the quaking of the Earth; the rending of the rocks; the opening of the graves; and other prodigies.—That he is really and identically God is therefore proved by the united testimony of Revelation and of nature.

God exists in the Unity of Three Divine Persons; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; who are "of one substance, power and Eternity:" And each of whom is therefore truly and essentially the Supreme Being.

Hence, the Saviour, being the Son, or Second Person in the Trinity, is God Himself, the Creator and preserver of all things. —His union, and that of the Holy Ghost, with the Father, is indeed mysterious. The equality of the Three Persons in the Trinity, is confessedly incomprehensible. The identity of God in His Triune capacity, surpasses the knowledge and understanding of man.

Nevertheless, the doctrine of the Trinity is to be believed; for it is a doctrine of the Bible, the authenticity of which is proved by undoubted evidence; the external evidence of its writers, and others; and the internal evidence of Christian experience.

To disbelieve in this doctrine because it cannot be understood, is to be unreasonable, and to depart from the usual mode of belief in other instances, where there is evidence of the truth proposed to be believed, whilst the truth itself, cannot be comprehended.—For instance; we acknowledge the existence of inert matter: of vegetable and animal life; and of immaterial beings; and yet the nature and constitution of these things, are as far beyond human comprehension, as the Trinity of the Godhead.

Nor let it be thought, that whilst the Saviour is God, he ceases to be man: For he, as the Scriptures clearly and unequivocally teach, is both man and God, uniting in one Person, two distinct natures; the human and Divine.

When crucified, it was his humanity only that suffered, his Divinity making that suffering what nothing but Divinity united to humanity could make it, an expiation for sin: Both for the hereditary sin transmitted to mankind from Adam through their ancestors;—and for the sin, which they as free agents actually and voluntarily commit, and of which they repent.

Mankind, having been originally made holy, and the heirs of happiness; but having by voluntary sin become unholy, and the heirs of misery; the Saviour, when no human means could be devised for their relief, condescended to suffer death as the only means of expiating their sin; of enabling them to become again holy, and to attain to the happiness that they had forfeited by transgression.

Although they cannot, in this world, even through the efficacy of the Saviour's death, become so perfectly holy as they were before they had sinned by transgressing the Divine law; yet if they repent, as they are privileged through that death to repent, they can attain to much holiness; and if they persevere in it, God will accept of them, and happiness will be their portion.

It was through love to mankind that the Saviour died for them. How, then, should their love for him be enkindled and reciprocated? And how should they manifest it, by obeying him? "If ye love me," says the Saviour, "keep my commandments."

With what shame; what repentance; what resolutions to live righteously in fu-

ture; should they reflect on themselves, for causing the Saviour to expire on the cross? Whilst he being able, through his infinite power to deliver himself from what was so ignominious and painful; yet, permitted them, because he loved them, to destroy the temple of his body, that he might enable them, upon repentance, and reformation of their lives, to have salvation and happiness through the merits of his death. What gratitude and thanks; what honor and ascriptions of praise are his due, for so glorious an exhibition of his love?

The attempts of the Jews to prevent his rising were in vain. When he rose, nature and revelation gave additional proof of his Divinity: For, there was an Earthquake; and at his sepulcher, an angel of God appeared, calling him "Lord," and saying: "He is risen."

That he actually rose, is further manifest, from his being seen by the apostles, and others, after that event.

The Scripture represents; that by virtue of his resurrection, men may be justified, by not being brought into condemnation for their sin: That after death, they will have a restoration to life, to the natural life lost

by their decease: That here, and hereafter, they may also have spiritual life, consisting in holiness:—In short; that they will be raised from the dead by a reunion of their souls and their bodies: And that they may be qualified for happiness; and may attain to its fruition, comparatively in this world, and fully and completely in the next.

But the Scripture also declares, explicitly and fully, that they must repent, and be holy in this world; in their present probationary state. That otherwise, they will, hereafter, instead of being justified, be condemned. That they will be destitute of holiness: Consequently of spiritual enjoyments: And that having no life but that which is natural and carnal; they will be miserable, irretrievably.

Thus the death and resurrection of the Saviour, were both necessary for the salvation and the happiness of men: And they are efficient means for that happiness, on the terms of repentance and of holiness. But they are inefficient, without a compliance with these terms: For "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." Without holiness, none can be saved: None can be happy.

The death and resurrection of the Saviour were necessary, that he might ascend to Heaven to prepare, according to his promise, a place for the righteous: And as an advocate for men, might intercede continually with God, in their behalf.

Behold him dying, rising, ascending, and making intercession, that men may be prepared to die; and be able to enter on a state of blessedness above. And how important it is that they be brought to a realizing sense of the shortness of life; of the little time which they have for preparing for death, and the untried scenes of Eternity.

Life is indeed short and uncertain. They who possess it, are at all times liable to lose it; and even its longest continuance, is of short duration.

Mankind are doomed to die; and we daily behold them passing from time to Eternity. We too, must soon follow them to the world of spirits, and we know not how suddenly.

The instances of mortality that we are called upon to witness, should cause us to realize the certainty of death, and to be prepared for its summons.

We commit the Infant to the ground. It

seems to be born but to die; to be brought into existence, only to be deprived of its being.

We also commit to the Earth, the deceased bodies of children and of youth, who are constantly falling victims to the ravages of death. Whilst their external beauty is unfolding, and the faculties of their minds are developing, they are hurried to untimely graves.

We likewise behold multitudes in middle age, resigning their life to "the king of terrors," and peopling with their bodies the regions of the dead. Cut down in the midst of usefulness, they leave many Relatives and friends to mourn their departure.

He too, who has arrived at the utmost bounds of life; whose age, perhaps, has passed "three score years and ten," sinks at last under the weight of time, and we commit him to the ground.

None are exempt from death. The old, the young; the rich, the poor; the free, the bond; the great, the small; the noble, the ignoble; all, without exception, must meet the common fate. Neither age, nor sex, nor condition can spare them. They are a

prey to a thousand diseases and casualties, and if they escape these, they are sure to fall under the infirmities of old age.

Every moment, witnesses the decease of some of our fellow mortals; and more than twenty-six millions of our race, are annually passing to the Eternal world.

"In the midst of life, we are in death." "Our days are made, as it were a span long." "Our age is even as nothing:" "And verily, every man living is altogether vanity."

We hold our lives by a frail and brittle tenure. Before we are aware, we are summoned to pass "through the valley of the shadow of death," and to appear before the "Judge of Quick and Dead."

Thus the temple of our bodies must be destroyed. "But thanks be to God, through Christ, which giveth us the victory:" For, as the temple of his body was raised from the dead, so our bodies will be raised. As he has ascended, so we also may ascend. As he is crowned with incorruption, immortality, and blessedness, and glory, so may we be thus crowned. As he will continue through Eternity, in Heaven, enjoy-

ing the society of the Father and the Holy Ghost; of angels, and of saints, and of all that Heaven affords; so we may there have the same abiding continuance, and the same enjoyment.

But we should keep constantly in mind, that Heaven is ours, only on condition, that we here have holiness and repentance: That if we fail to perform this condition, misery will be our portion.

Is not an escape from misery, a sufficient motive for being holy? Is not also, endless felicity? Are not both united, a sufficient inducement to cease from sinning, and to perform the obligations of our duty.

As we value our spiritual peace; as we would avoid interminable woe, let us live according to the requirements of God.

Our probation will cease when life shall end. Then shall we have no further opportunity of making preparation for Eternity. "As death shall leave us, so the judgment will find us." And the judgment will come. The trump of God will summon it. And we must all appear, to be judged.

Grand and terrific will be the scene; from the sound of the trumpet; the open-

ing of the graves; the innumerable multitude to be judged; the disparity in their appearance; and all the agitation of their thoughts.

Still more grand and terrific will the scene be rendered, by the descent of the Judge and His angels, and the development of all human thoughts, and of all human transactions.

The scene will be heightened to the highest, when the Judge, clothed with all the attributes of God, shall proclaim to all men, individually, the sentence of their unchanged destiny.

Then, amidst the dissolving Elements, Heaven will appear for the righteous; and Hell for the wicked.

My hearers:—May we be prepared, for those awful: Those future: Those sure events.

May we live the life, and die the death, of the righteous: And at the final day of judgment, may we find favor with the Judge: And may we then have a place in the peaceful, the pure, the happy mansions, of his Eternal kingdom. Amen.

SERMON XXII.

AN ASCENSION SERMON.

Saint Luke xxiv. 51.

"And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven."

It is thus declared by the Scripture, that when Jesus Christ was ready to ascend from the Earth into Heaven, he blessed his Disciples and ascended.

His ascension was an event, which, considered with respect to its appearance only, must have been very solemn and impressive. To behold a person rising from the Earth; then received by a cloud, and conveyed upward, till beyond the reach of human vision; and at the same time to be assured that he has gone into Heaven; must be a sight, at once, the most solemn and sublime; and calculated to awaken the most serious reflections.

The impressions produced by the ascent of Christ, and the grandeur of that event, must have been exceedingly increased, by the consideration of his character; inasmuch, as he possessed, not only human nature, but the Divinity of God.

As a man, he had done all things well: And had finished the work, which the Father had sent him to perform. As God; he had manifested his omnipotence; his Infinite love and goodness; and other attributes: In a word; the perfections of his nature.

How impressive and affecting, therefore, must have been the contemplations of his disciples, when they saw his departure.

They could not but reflect upon him as that Divine Person who had "brought life and immortality to light:" Who had revealed the will of God to the human race: Who by his Heavenly precepts, had instructed men to be virtuous and good; and had given them an example of living "soberly, righteously, and Godly:" Who had died to redeem mankind from future woe; and had risen from the dead, that repenting sinners might be forgiven: Who had testified to the world, that "the wages

of sin is death;" and that the reward of holiness, is life and peace.

They must also have reflected upon the future judgment, to which he shall come to judge both the living and the dead: For, whilst they were witnessing his ascent, assurance of that judgment was given them by two Angels that appeared and said to them; "this same Jesus, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven."

Their thoughts and reflections, were such as produced good effects. For, we are informed that they worshiped him: That they felt great joy: And, that they continued to praise and to bless God.

The reflections which were proper for them, are likewise suitable for us: For we are no less interested than they were, in the ascension of Christ: In his coming to the future judgment: And in all that he has done for the salvation of mankind. And like those disciples, may we continue to praise God: To worship him who came to save us: And to feel much spiritual and religious joy.

We shall now continue our remarks, by

considering: *First*—Why, when he ascended, he left behind him his Disciples: *Secondly*—For what purpose, he departed into Heaven: And, *Thirdly*—Why he blessed his disciples at the time of his departure.

First.—Our Saviour had all power, in Heaven, and in Earth. When he ascended, he parted with his disciples; he left them on the Earth; that he might display his power, his wisdom and his goodness, in watching and in keeping, in guarding and preserving them; and in administering to their temporal and spiritual wants: So that they might truly call him their protecting Lord; and say to him, in the language of the Psalmist: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want:" "He leads me in the paths of righteousness:" "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff"—"comfort me:" "Thou preparest a table before me, in the presence of my enemies; surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever."

He also left his Disciples behind him, that

they might assist in promoting his interest amongst men. That they might be instrumental in building up his spiritual kingdom here below. For he permitted them to be his disciples, not only for their own sake, but for the promotion, of his glory, and of the happiness of their fellow men, by laboring to persuade others to become good; to be obedient to his commands; and to be his followers: And to be zealous for his glory, his honor and his praise. Hence, he said to them; "ye are the light of the world." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in Heaven."

He likewise left them, that by their longer continuance in an Earthly state, they might have time to exercise and improve, through the trials incident to this life, their Christian principles and practices, and thereby be the better qualified for possessing the Heavenly Inheritance: In other words; that their adversity, or tribulation, might, according to the sentiment of Saint Paul, produce "patience; and patience, experience; and experience hope; until they might come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge

of the Son of God unto the measure of the fullness of Christ;" that is, unto the love and holiness, which the Gospel of Christ requires.

Finally; he left them, that they might imitate him by a life of patience and suffering, and thereby be qualified to be with him hereafter in Heaven; there to be honored by his Father: For he says; "if any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be." "If any man serve me, him will my father honor."

Our condition, my Brethren, is like theirs. Our Earthly existence is prolonged, that the Divine power and goodness, may be manifested towards us; that we may know and acknowledge the favors which we thus receive; and that we may be disposed to love and obey the Author of these favors: That we may employ our time, our talents and our means, in His praise, and for His honor; for the advancement of the true religion; and for the welfare and happiness of others. That through the trials and vicissitudes of our present state of being, we may be the better fitted and prepared for the enjoyments of another world. That after a

patient continuance in well doing, in imitation of Christ, who was a perfect and illustrious example of all that is excellent good and great, we may be admitted to the mansions of his rest, and dwell with him in the presence of the Father,—in the presence of the Triune God; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Secondly.—The design, the purpose of his ascending was, to reinstate himself in that glory, which he had possessed in Heaven from Eternity; and to which he alluded, when he prayed and said: "O Father; glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was."

His design was also to obtain a triumph over all the enemies of himself, and of his people; even over sin, over Satan, over death, and over hell: A triumph which is expressed in the words; "when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men:" For these words plainly intimate, that when he made his ascent, he led captive all the enemies that had held mankind in captivity and bondage; and that he was possessed of all the spirit-

ual gifts that are necessary for the conversion of sinners; and for the salvation of those who repent; and believe the Gospel; and that he is ever ready, and willing to bestow these inestimable gifts, upon the repenting, and the prayerful.

His purpose was likewise to make intercession for his People, and to save them, by pleading in their behalf, the merits of the atonement, which he had made for them by his death: For, says the apostle to the Hebrews; "Such an High priest becomes us; who is holy, harmless, and undefiled; separate from sinners, and made higher than the Heavens." "Wherefore, he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God, by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

He further designed to open the way, for the effusion, the descent of the Spirit, which is the Third Person in the Trinity; even the Holy Ghost, the Comforter and Sanctifier of the good; according to his promise when he said to his disciples; "it is expedient for you, that I go away; for if I go not away, the comforter will not come: But if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

He moreover, as the leader of his disciples, departed into Heaven, there to prepare a place for them, and to make all things ready for their reception: For he said to them expressly: "I go to prepare a place for you." And he said to the Father: "I will, that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am."

It was not only for his Personal Disciples; but for us; my Brethren; if we continue to be Christians, that he went to Heaven, to triumph over human enemies; to impart spiritual gifts; to make intercession; to bestow the Spirit; to become the Author of salvation; and to prepare a place in the peaceful and happy mansions of the Eternal World.

Thirdly.—When he parted with his Disciples, he blessed them, perhaps, by praying for them, as Isaac prayed for Jacob, when he said: "God give thee of the dew of Heaven; cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be every one that blesseth thee:" And as Jacob prayed for Ephraim and Manasseh: when he laid his hands upon them and said; "God, before whom my fathers Abraham, and Isaac did walk; the God

which fed me all my life long, unto this day; the angel, which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads."—Christ also blessed his disciples, by virtue of his Divine authority; for to him, all power and authority were given.

He blessed them agreeably to his character, and the work, which he had come to perform.—It had been predicted, that his people should receive his blessing; for David had said; "Men shall be blessed in him."—He had been sent for the purpose of bestowing blessings; for, said the apostle Peter to the Jews; "God having raised up His son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you, from his iniquities."

He commenced his Earthly ministry with blessing, when he said; "blessed are the poor in spirit—they that mourn—the meek—they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness—the merciful—the poor in heart—the peacemakers—they which are persecuted for righteousness sake—and blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."—

With blessing, he also caused that ministry to be terminated; For, whilst he blessed his Disciples, "he was parted from them and carried up into Heaven."

He blesses with Eternal blessings, not all indiscriminately, but those, and those only, who repent; and have faith in his promises; and are possessed of virtue and religion.

He blessed his disciples to convince them that he loved them, and that his love for them would continue: That he had forgiven the imperfections, and the frailty of their nature: That he was about to leave them, not because he was displeased with them, but because it was expedient that he should return to the Father.

He had recently been persecuted, crucified and slain. But he had now burst the bonds of death and had risen; and he was about to depart, to be exalted, to be crowned, to be enthroned in Heaven: And he blessed his Disciples, that they might be encouraged with the hope, the prospect, the assurance, that although they should have painful trials in the world, and should die, yet that death should be a termination of their trouble; that they should rise again;

that they should then follow him to the Heavenly mansions; and there, with himself; with saints, and with angels; in God's very presence, be exalted to happiness and glory.

Thus he blessed them that they might be comforted; that when ill treated by the world; or in any way afflicted, they might be patient, knowing that their affliction would be made to cease, and that they would be ultimately freed from every sorrow.

He blessed them, that they might know and experience, that they were his, and that he was theirs: That although he should ascend, and leave them on the Earth, they would continue to be the objects of his love and care; and that it would be their duty to reciprocate his love; and obey his laws.

He blesses us, my Bethren, in like manner, and for like reasons; and he is therefore entitled to our gratitude, our love and obedience. This observation brings us to the closing remarks;—or the application of our discourse.

As Christ, when he ascended up on High, left his Personal disciples on the Earth,

that they might improve their faith and their patience, and all their Christian graces, and thus be fitted for future felicity and glory: so for the same purpose he prolongs our life, amidst the vicissitudes, the changes and the chances of this world.—As he left behind him those disciples, whilst he went to prepare a place for them in the Heavenly Mansions; so he leaves us in our present state, whilst in those mansions, he is preparing for us a place. As he blessed those disciples, and thus encouraged them to be patient in well doing; so he blesses us, encourages and strengthens us, to be patient; and to persevere in our Christian calling.—As it was only on condition that those personal disciples should perform their duty according to his requirements, that he was pledged to admit them to that place of happiness which he went to prepare for them, so he will receive us to that happy place, only on the same condition: For they who refuse to repent, and believe the Gospel, and to live righteously; in other words, to perform the duty which he requires, will never be permitted to enter the Mansions of his rest. They will be thrust into "outer

darkness," to experience the woe of the future.

Then let those who are living in the nonperformance of their duty, repent and reform. Let them become holy in their hearts, and righteous in their lives.

If we, my brethren, have reason to think that we discharge the duty required of us, let us be careful, and watchful and prayerful, that we may persevere in doing well.

Whatever sorrow we may now experience, we shall finally be with Christ; with the Father, with the Holy Ghost;—in Heaven; —and be comforted;—if we are truly good; —if we continue to be Christ's followers:— For he says to us: "Ye now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy, no man taketh from you."

At the day of our death he will see us, and cause us to rejoice, by receiving our souls into Paradise.—At the final day of judgment, he will also see us, and cause us to rejoice, by giving us the invitation; "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

But if we are in truth his, we have even now, his spiritual presence with us. We have the consolations which his spirit gives to the upright and obedient. It is important, that we experience these consolations.

According to his teaching, he dwells in his servants, and they in him: And the Scripture says to them, concerning him: "Whom, having not seen, ye love, in whom, though now, ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

Thus, notwithstanding his bodily absence, he is spiritually present with them.—His Spirit is that of the living God. It is the Spirit of the Father. It is the Holy Ghost. —It is shed abroad in their hearts.—It teaches them their duty; consoles them in their trials; and fills them with the hope of future good.

Since Christ has been raised from the humiliation of death and the grave, and been exalted to the power and authority of Heaven: Since he there intercedes for our happiness, continually pleading the all-sufficient merits of the sacrifice made by his death; let us never cease to profess and to

practice his religion; and to expect through that religion, salvation and happiness, in a world to come. Let us according to the teaching of that religion, pray for mercy and Spiritual help. As the Apostle to the Hebrews exhorts; "let us come boldly unto the throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in the time of need."

Let our faith in Christ's death, as making a propitiation for our sin; as redeeming us from sin and from misery, if we comply with the terms of the Gospel, be established and unwavering.

It is, when men are truly Christ's disciples, that "he sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied."—May we therefore be his followers, his disciples; and may we continue such until he shall come and take us to himself.

He is now in heaven. But he will reappear on the Earth, and then return again to Heaven, and take his people with him.

It will be for judgment that he will come to the Earth, at the end of the world. Before him will be gathered all nations. All will be judged by him. He will consign the

wicked to Everlasting punishment: But he will admit the righteous to the enjoyment of life Eternal.

May it be our lot to attain to the fruition of that life. May we live and die in the favor of Him who made and redeemed us; and may we be saved in a world without end. Amen.

SERMON XXIII.

A SERMON FOR WHIT-SUNDAY.

Acts of the Apostles ii. 4.

"AND THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST."

THE Gospel Dispensation, was introduced to the world, by the incarnation and nativity of Christ. It was afterwards established by a series of other wonderful and interesting events, the most prominent of which, were the miracles and death of Christ, his resurrection and ascension; and, finally, the gift of the Holy Ghost to his disciples.

Subsequently to these events, their occurrence has not been known, and therefore not believed by those who have had no means of becoming acquainted with the Gospel as revealed in the New Testament. Men of this description, without doubt, are excused for their ignorance, and want of

belief, since they have not, wilfully, disbelieved, in the New Testament Revelation.

But what excuse can be rendered for those who have been acquainted with the Gospel according to such Revelation, and yet have rejected it? And have denied that Christ was God Incarnate: That he has died, and risen, and ascended; and has sent the Holy Ghost as a comforter to those who have believed in him, and embraced him as their Saviour?

Their unbelief is justly attributed to their depravity, which they have inherited from Adam through their Ancestors, and which has been increased by their own voluntary sin, and in which their wrong principles and practices have originated.

It is through their depravity that they have discarded the doctrine of the Trinity, than which, nothing is more clearly, more fully and explicitly taught by Divine Revelation. Nor is it contrary to reason to believe in this doctrine. It is as easy and as reasonable to believe in the union of the Three Divine Persons of the Godhead, as it is to believe that the souls and the bodies of men are united; or that a mys-

terious affinity forms the simple Elements of matter into the compound bodies of the material creation.

That Christ is the Son, proceeding from God who is the Father, is evident, inasmuch as Saint Peter says to him: "Thou art the Son of the living God." That he is, at the same time God Himself, is as evident, since he says: "I and my Father are One;" and since Saint Paul says of him: "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God;" and ascribes to him omnipotence, by saying, that, "by him, were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible."

The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son: For he must proceed from whatever sends him; and Christ the Son says expressly: "The comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things." And again he says: "When the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you, He shall testify of me." The Holy Ghost, is likewise God: For, says Saint Peter to Ananias: "Why has Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou

hast not lied unto men, but unto God." It is thus that the apostle identifies the Holy Ghost as being God Himself.

Moreover, God is one indivisible Being: For, says Moses: "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord:" And Saint Paul says to the Ephesians: "There is one God and Father of all."

The passages which we have now cited from the Sacred Oracles, are a sufficient proof of the Unity of God, in a Trinity of Persons; and the Scriptures afford a multitude of other passages, in proof of the same Divine truth. This truth should be believed; in order, that what is done by each of the Three Persons in the Trinity, to free mankind from the dominion of sin, and to lead them to happiness, may be rightly understood, so that mankind may be persuaded to the performance of their duty; for after all that God has done for them, they can never attain to happiness, without performing their duty as Divinely enjoined.

The favors which through the Gospel Dispensation, are bestowed upon men, by the Three Eternal Persons, are equally and vitally important. Our remaining obser-

vations, at this time, however, must, according to the tenor of the text, be chiefly confined to the gifts, and operations of the Holy Ghost.

They to whom the text refers, were the Apostles; who when assembled in the temple at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, soon after the ascension, were filled with the Holy Ghost, whereby they were then endowed with several extraordinary powers, among which, that of speaking in languages, they had never learned, was conspicuous. They were thus endowed in attestation of the truth of the Gospel which they preached; and to enable them to establish permanently, the Christian Church, which was then in its Infancy.

There is another peculiar gift of the Holy Ghost, which, not only like the one, we have just now specified, was communicated in the earlier ages of Christianity; but which continues through every age of the Christian Church. It is that which confers on the Christian Priesthood the authority and honor of preserving the Church, by preaching the Gospel; by Ecclesiastical discipline; and by administering the sacraments insti-

tuted by Christ: For, says an apostle; "no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." "So," also, says the same apostle; "Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest, but He that said unto him; Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

It was the Holy Ghost, by whom Christ was conceived; who said to him, "thou art my son;" and consecrated him to the priestly office, according to the calling of God: And it is the Holy Ghost, who consecrates others to the Christian Ministry, by an inward preparation of the heart, and by outward rites legitimately performed.

There are ordinary operations of the Holy Ghost, which are experienced by all. For instance; He convinces men of their sin; of the certainty of the judgment; and of the necessity of righteousness: For, says Christ, when discoursing to his disciples concerning the Holy Ghost whom he calls the Comforter, "I will send him unto you, and when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

We appeal to men, whether they have not been convinced of sin, and viewed them-

selves as being naturally and practically sinful: Whether they have not been afraid of being judged and condemned for their evil disposition and conduct; and felt the need of being righteous. When thus affected, it is the Holy Ghost that affects them.

He is termed, "The Spirit," and the apostle to the Galatians specifies as the fruits of the Spirit; love, long-suffering, goodness and other qualities of righteousness, particularly faith, to which the same apostle refers, when he says to the Corinthians; "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Thus the Holy Ghost influences men to have faith in Christ, and righteousness of life.

When they yield to His influence, He renews them by a Spiritual birth, whereby they are saved, and admitted to God's Kingdom. Hence, the apostle to Titus says of Christ; "He saved us"—"by the renewing of the Holy Ghost:" And Christ, by saying; "except a man be born"—"of the Spirit," —"he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God," teaches that man *can* enter into that Kingdom by being thus born.

The Holy Ghost sanctifies, and cleanses

from impurity: For says the apostle to the Thessalonians; "God hath"—"chosen you through sanctification of the Spirit."

The Holy Ghost also dwells in men, and through him they will hereafter be raised from the dead. For says the apostle to the Romans: "He that raised up Christ from the Dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

From this view of the subject, it appears, that the Holy Ghost, has prompted men to engage in establishing the Gospel Dispensation: In the first place; by imparting to certain inviduals the gift of tongues and of miracles, and of understanding and teaching the Divine will of God with the utmost facility: that by these means the Christian Church might be prosperous at its very commencement. In the Second place; by consecrating Christian ministers to their respective offices, that through their instrumentality, there might be a perpetuity of the Church, its sacraments and ordinances, its doctrines and its worship, so that "the gates of Hell," might not prevail against it: And in the third place; by operating upon the minds and consciences of all men, in such

a manner, as to awaken them to a sense of their sin, their guilt and danger; and to cause them when they yield to the operation, to be spiritually changed, and thus to have holiness of heart and of life; thus to have faith in the Triune God; to prove, and to purify their faith by good works; to be sanctified; to be saved; to be heirs of God's spiritual Kingdom; to hold spiritual communion with Him; to be prepared for death; and to have hope and assurance, that when their souls shall be reunited to their resuscitated bodies, and they shall be raised from the dead and brought into judgment, they will be recipients of a happy immortality.

Nor is this all. For the Holy Ghost, gives to good men, a clear and experimental knowledge of Divine things; impresses the truth of religion upon their minds, their memories and hearts; helps them to believe in the doctrines, and to rely on the promises, of the Gospel, and to obey the Divine commands. He guides them to truth, imparts to them Spiritual strength, influences them to piety and virtue, gives them a desire to be good, increases their faith and holiness,

supports them in their trials, their temptations and spiritual conflicts, causes them to grow in grace, helps them in their prayers, and assists them in meditating on the word of God. He makes intercession with God, in their behalf. He gives them understanding and comfort; dwells with them; and affords them the consolations of His presence.

It should ever be remembered, that he bestows his saving and most precious favors upon those only, who are willing to receive them by yielding to his influence.

They who resist this influence, are subject to the severest punishment. For says an apostle: "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy. Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath done despite to the spirit of Grace?" And the Saviour declares, that sin against the Holy Ghost, shall never be forgiven: And the apostle to the Hebrews affirms; that "it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." Well, therefore, might the apostle to the Thessalonians admonish: "Quench not the spirit."

Spiritual light, and life, and happiness, and glory, are the effects of yielding to the motions and the teaching of the Holy Ghost.—But the penalty of resisting him is dreadful. It is the loss of happiness, and the infliction of punishment.

Men should therefore submit to the influence of the Holy Ghost, which is God's Spirit. They need to be delivered from the power of sin, by being sanctified, that is, by being made holy. For, "without holiness," says an apostle, "no man shall see the Lord."—It is the office of the Holy Ghost to sanctify. He is the author of all holiness; the principle of spiritual life; and without His assistance, without his influence upon the heart, men would forever remain, "dead in trespasses and sin," obnoxious to the wrath of God, and all the penalties of a broken law.

It is, indeed, of infinite importance to submit to the Spirit that illumines the mind, sheds abroad the love of God in the heart, subdues sinful passions, purifies and renews the affections, subjects the will to a compliance with the law of God, exites to duty, consoles and supports, and gives a foretaste of Heaven.

This Spirit, is to be savingly obtained, by holy meditation and prayer: By attending to the ordinances of the Church: By reading the Sacred Oracles: And by humble endeavors to discharge the obligations of human duty. In a word, by complying with what the Spirit itself directs.

This same Spirit, may also be lost by sin, wilfully committed, and wilfully persisted in; and when thus lost, it can never be recovered, for such is the sentiment not only of the apostle Paul, but of Christ himself.

Not every deadly sin, however, willingly committed, is sin against the Holy Ghost.

On the one hand, therefore, men should not be too easily driven to despair, under the impression, that they have committed unpardonable sin: And on the other hand, they should be watchful, and prayerful, lest they be guilty of the worst of all sins, that which is against the Holy Ghost, and which can never be forgiven, in this world, or the next.

Indeed they should at all times strive to be divested of their sin: To grow in grace: And to improve to the utmost of their ability, their spiritual talents.

God the Father so loved the world that he sent into it, His son Jesus Christ to redeem it. The Son so loved the world that He submitted to be sent for that purpose. And the Holy Ghost submitted to be sent by the Father and the Son, to bestow spiritual gifts upon men; gifts necessary for enabling them to work out their salvation, and to obtain a Heavenly Inheritance.

A mere speculative belief in these sublime truths, or a cold and heartless worship of the Trinity, without sincerity, is not acceptable to God. He requires a belief which is full and sincere, practical and holy: And a worship which engages the thoughts, the energies, and all the powers of the soul, with earnestness, and with holy fear.

Then let us render to the Triune God that worship which He requires of us, and let us conform our principles and our conduct to the Divine and holy laws, which He has prescribed and promulged. And on the Festival which the Church this day observes, let us devoutly thank Him for the Infinite display of His love, in redeeming us through our Lord Jesus Christ; in vouchsafing those gifts of the Holy Ghost, which have enabled

the apostle and others to establish and perpetuate the Church of Christ on the Earth: And in bestowing that ordinary measure of the Spirit, through which we and our fellow men have ability to "worship Him in Spirit and in Truth?" To be holy: To possess the true faith: And to perform the duty which He requires of man.

Finally;—let us serve God during our probation here below; and may He graciously admit us for Christ's sake, to the Everlasting enjoyment of His Kingdom above in Heaven. Amen.

SERMON XXIV.

A SERMON FOR TRINITY SUNDAY.

Saint Luke ii. 38.

"AND SHE COMING IN AT THAT INSTANT, GAVE THANKS LIKEWISE UNTO THE LORD; AND SPAKE OF HIM TO ALL THEM THAT LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION IN JERUSALEM."

THESE words are recorded of Anna a prophetess, who like Simeon gave thanks at the presentation of Christ in the temple; and spake of Christ, and of the redemption obtained through him for the human race.

If we, like Simeon and Anna, are possessed of genuine piety and religion, we also shall be disposed to speak thankfully concerning Christ; and concerning the redemption that he has purchased for us, and for all men.

We therefore propose to consider, briefly; *First;*—The cause of this redemption: *Secondly;*—The means, by which it was

effected: *Then;*—The character; and instructions of him who procured it: And;—*Lastly;*—the result of its accomplishment.

First.—At the advent of Christ, the Messiah; the Second golden age, was said to have commenced. Cæsar Augustus, the Roman Emperor, had refused the title of Lord. The temple of Janus was shut: And wars which had so long prevailed on the Eastern continent, were hushed to repose.

These circumstances conspired to welcome Christ, as the Prince of peace; and to signify the mildness, the tranquillity, and the glory of his future reign.

Previously to this distinguished era, spiritual darkness had covered the Earth. The depravity of man, in consequence of Adam's transgression, had filled the world with sin and woe. For the truth of these assertions, we appeal to the history of Ancient times. Individuals lived only to be miserable. Empires flourished but to fall. Hapless man. Driven from Paradise: Tainted with sin: Involved in misery: And worst of all; without true and permanent foundation, on which to rest the hope and assurance of Everlasting life.

The Almighty looked with pity on the condition of the human race. In compassion, He beheld their wretchedness. He saw, that without Divine assistance, not only their temporal but Eternal happiness was lost. This assistance He was determined to bestow. But, "without the shedding of blood, there was no remission" of sin. Hence, he decreed the incarnation and nativity, the death and resurrection of His Son.

Here, then, is presented to our view, the cause of the redemption. That cause, was the love of the Creator, exercised towards His fallen creatures, to rescue them from misery. As an Evangelist affirms; "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have Everlasting life."

Secondly:—The means, by which the redemption was effected, was none other, than the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, on Calvary's Mount. And is it so? Is man so wicked as to kill his Saviour! On whose eye, does not the tear gather, on revolving on the tragic scene? What

heart so obdurate, as not to shudder at the thought! Well might the vail of the temple at Jerusalem be rent in twain. Well might the Earth quake, and the rocks be rent. Well might the sun withhold his light, and the day be veiled in midnight darkness. And well, indeed, might the Centurion exclaim; "this was the Son of God."

Thirdly:—The character of Christ, our Redeemer, strikes us with wonder and admiration. Though "he was the glory of all worlds;"—"the bright and refulgent Luminary of the Universe;"—yet, for the benefit of men, he condescended in humility, to leave the abode of Heaven, and descend on the Earth; there to be born of a woman; —to be made "in the fashion of a man." He is therefore as an apostle declares; "God manifest in the flesh."

He is indeed God Himself: For he is the Son, or Second Person in the Trinity, which consists of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: And these Three are One. That there should be Three Persons in the Godhead, "of one substance, power and Eternity," is truly a mystery. But it is a

mystery, taught by the Oracles of "Him, who cannot lie." "It is a mystery, the truth of which, the Christian believes and adores." What though it cannot be understood by finite intelligences? Are we to believe nothing but what we can comprehend? On that principle, scepticism should be embraced, with all its absurdity and folly. On that principle, we might deny the existence even of matter itself; for we know not what it is. Nay; we might doubt the very being of our souls, since we can have no adequate idea of immateriality. The mystery of a doctrine, is therefore no objection to its truth: And the grand doctrine of the Trinity, must forever remain firm and unshaken, against the assaults of unbelievers, and the ridicule of infidels.

Thus the Redeemer united in one Person two distinct natures, the human, and Divine. Yes; verily, he was both God and man. His Infinite and Eternal Spirit assumed human shape; and though he dwelt on the Earth, he dwelt also in Heaven. Though he died, yet he lives through Eternity. Though he was an inhabitant of Judea

and apparently a being of time, yet he is really and identically that God who inhabits Infinite extension, and who exists throughout the boundless realms of duration.

He is the mediator between God and man. Man was made upright and holy, in the image of the Creator. He was permitted to live in Eden, a Terrestrial Paradise; to use the fruit of the tree of life; and to exercise dominion over the other creatures of the Earth. He was privileged, by being happily guided and directed by the blessed influences of the Holy Spirit. A continuance of these, and of other favors; and especially a glorious immortality in Heaven, without tasting death, was promised to him, on condition, of obedience to his Maker. But, in an evil moment, yielding to the temptation of the Devil, he disobeyed God, and partook of the forbidden fruit. Thus he forfeited his title to Earthly and Heavenly enjoyments; and incurred the penalties of temporal, and Eternal death.

When we compare his sinful and fallen situation, to his condition before disobedience, O how changed! How wretched

do we find him! Once holy; but now sinful. Once exhibiting the impress of Deity; but now the image of Satan. Once heir to Eternal life; now an inheritor of perdition. Once honorable and glorious; now infamous and degraded. Once living in anticipation of future felicity; but now filled with fearful forebodings for the future. Once exalted with the glorious prospect of Heaven; now cast down, under the gloomy prospect of Hell.

No human means could relieve mankind from this situation. But Christ our Redeemer, given by the Father, came in Infinite love and mercy to their assistance; and by suffering, and dying on the cross, made reconciliation between them and God; stayed the Divine vengeance from being executed on them; atoned for their original and actual sin; and opened a way, whereby they might be saved. But he has prescribed faith, and repentance, and a holy life, as the terms, on which they are to avail themselves of the benefits of the atonement.

He made this propitiation, this atone ment for their sin, through the unite

efficacy of his humanity and Divinity; his humanity suffering in the nature of man who had offended; and his Divinity making that suffering of Infinite value and merit. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God:" For, if we accept of the terms of salvation, nothing shall be able to separate us from His love.

Christ is our Prophet; because he instructs us in the will of God; and the nature of the Christian Church: Informs us of our duty and spiritual concerns: Foretells to us the resurrection, and the coming judgment; a future retribution, and happiness in a world to come.

He is our Priest; because he makes atonement for our sins, offering for us continual intercession before the Father. Because through his Grace and love he blesses us, and turns us from our iniquities.

He is our King, giving us laws and rules for the regulation of our conduct as individuals, and in our collective capacity as a church; and delegating his authority to an order of men for administering the government of the Church, and for the perpetuity of its ministry.

He is the end and finishing of the Jewish law: For on him center all the promises, prophecies and types of the Old Testament.

Finally; he is Judge of "Quick and Dead." At the last day, when the trump of God shall sound; when the dead shall arise, and mingle with the living; and all shall assemble at the judgment; then he, attended by his Holy Angels, will appear in the clouds of Heaven, coming in power and great glory. "Every eye shall see him, and they who pierced him." Then sitting on his judgment seat, he will judge the whole human race, and will declare to them individually, their unchanged; their Eternal destiny.

Fourthly.—The instructions of Christ our Redeemer, are vitally important. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," is the first commandment of God: The primary rule of the Redeemer's instructions: The fundamental principle of religion and morality. Into this general rule, all other religious and moral rules, that are Evangelical and correct, may be resolved. Its chief modification is, "thou shalt love

thy neighbor as thyself;" which, is, indeed, "like unto it," since love to our fellow men, flows necessarily, and directly from love to God. The Saviour declares, that on these two things, love to God, and love to man, "hang all the law and the prophets."

They who are willing to be instructed in these two precepts, and who obey them cheerfully and willingly, will yield a humble submission to all the concurrent injunctions of the Gospel. They will act agreeably to all the Redeemer's instructions, detailed by the Evangelists and apostles.

These instructions teach us, not only to love God, but to reverence, and worship Him "in spirit and in truth;" to obey and serve Him truly and devotedly, and to honor and magnify His Holy name, above all other names, in the Earth or Heaven.—Not only to love our fellow men, but to treat them with kindness and forbearance, forgiving them as we hope to be forgiven of our Heavenly Father.—Not only to love our friends but our enemies. To "bless them that curse us:" And to "pray for them that persecute" us: To be patient, and penitent, and humble; meek and forgiving; seeking

for peace, rather than satisfaction; striving for reconciliation, rather than revenge.—Likewise to be free from voluptuous passions; to live soberly and chastely, and to keep ourselves "unspotted from the world:" To have unfeigned faith in Jesus Christ; sincere and hearty repentance for sin, and to "bring forth works meet for repentance;" works, which prove our faith to be that, which purifies the heart.

For our encouragement, and that we may be duly incited to the performance of our duty, the Redeemer has graciously condescended to bring "life and immortality to light;" to reveal to us the certainty of happiness beyond the grave. If we know his instructions, happy shall we be if we observe them.

Then let us observe—let us obey them, with alacrity and zeal; that it may be well with us in the future. That when time shall cease, and "the Earth shall depart as a scroll;" when "the Heavens shall be dissolved, and the Elements shall melt with fervent heat," and the Universe shall be hastening to ruin; we may appear undismayed. That when "tried before assembled

worlds," we may receive the approbation of the Judge; and be welcomed to his Eternal rest.

Fifthly.—The redemption resulted, in substituting the Christian Dispensation, for the Jewish: In founding and establishing the Christian Church, by Jesus Christ, instead of the Jewish Church, which had been founded and established by Moses.

By the Saviour's death, the Jewish Economy was made to cease, and Christianity was introduced to continue to the end of time. Thus the Redemption established the Christian religion; which obviously produces the happiest effects. It restrains, to a vast extent, licentiousness, wickedness and vice; and causes multitudes to be actuated, by virtuous and pious motives; by the feelings of probity, charity and benevolence. It improves the disposition and the conduct of those who embrace it; making them better; and consequently, happier. It assuages their sufferings; soothes them in trouble and afflictions; tranquilizes their feelings, and consoles their thoughts, amidst the vicissitudes of life.

They who embraced it in the time of the Apostles, were favored with extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghost; as it happened, for instance, at the Feast of Pentecost, soon after the ascension; and subsequently, in Samaria, when they who had there been baptized, were confirmed by two of the apostles; and also, at the confirmation of converts at Ephesus.—Since the Apostolic age, Christians have been blessed with the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus they are enabled to hold communion and spiritual intercourse with God; and to feel assured of future enjoyment in Him, "in whom there is fullness of Joy."

Christianity, has likewise contributed to the improvement of civil government and laws. In those countries where it has obtained, it has generally occasioned Political authority to be exercised with greater lenity and moderation. It has caused the duties and the rights of mankind, to be more correctly ascertained, and precisely defined; and, consequently, laws to be made more equitably, and executed with more impartiality and humanity. It has shed a benign influence upon communities, families and

states by mitigating the evils of despotism the cruelties of oppression, and the horrors of war. By elevating the standard of Public manners, tastes and morals. By purifying the Domestic relations; and chastening the passions and principles of men. It has produced establishments for the relief of the poor and the sick; establishments which were unknown, even to the Romans and the Greeks, amidst all their boasted wisdom, knowledge and refinement, until the Gospel had obtained footing in the Roman Empire. It has shaken down the wretched fabrics of Idol worship, and Pagan philosophy, which once prevailed in many of the present enlightened and Christianized parts of the world.

These and other achievements of Christianity, exhibit the nature and happy results of the redemption, which was accomplished by him, concerning whom, the Prophetess Anna spake and gave thanks in the temple; —concerning him, who is the anointed of God, even Christ our Lord.

But, it is objected to Christianity, that it has been the source of evil. Religious fanaticism and intolerance, have, indeed,

done mischief in the world. For instance; the European crusades; the inquisition; and religious persecutions, are evidence of the mischief.

So has the municipal law, sometimes been too rigorously enforced. It has punished the innocent. Tyrants have often converted it into an engine of cruelty and oppression. Nevertheless, it must obtain amongst men. It cannot be dispensed with. Language also, is frequently made the vehicle of slander, and of much mischief. It must, however, continue to be used for the communication of sentiments and thought. The use of food is daily perverted to surfeiting: Yet he who should refuse it, on this account, would, justly be suspected of madness. In truth, there is no good thing, that is not subject to abuse. Therefore, a thing may be of general utility, though bad men, may make it a source of partial evil, by using it for the accomplishment of wicked and improper purposes. Hence, if hypocrites and tyrants, have occasionally made Christianity an instrument of wrong, it is not, on this account, to be rejected.

But, after all; the evils that are imputed to Christianity, are in reality, to be attributed to the want of it, and not to Christianity itself, which, in fact, can never be directly the source, even of the smallest evil.

It is, indeed, the greatest of blessings. Wherever it has prevailed, it has diminished vice; and lessened the evils, and the miseries of life.

Finally; it has ameliorated the condition of man; and it will, ultimately give peace to the world.

Who, then, does not wish Christianity to continue prevalent in Christendom? Nay; to be embraced in every quarter of the globe?—By the dull Hindoo on the banks of Ganges: By those in the wilds of Africa: By the wandering Arab, following his caravan: By the millions of China, flocking to their Idolatrous worship: And by the native tribes in the forests of America?

And when we take into consideration the exertions that are making, through the medium of missionary, and other Christian societies, and through individual zeal, for the promotion and extension of the Gospel; may we not indulge the fond hope, that the

time is not far distant, when the people of all nations, tongues and languages, shall be converted to the true religion? When the gaudy temples of India, the Pagodas of China, and the Mosques of the False prophet, shall be no more; or converted into sanctuaries of the living God. Amen.